

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Frank Tousey.

No. 114.

NEW YORK, MARCH 29, 1901.

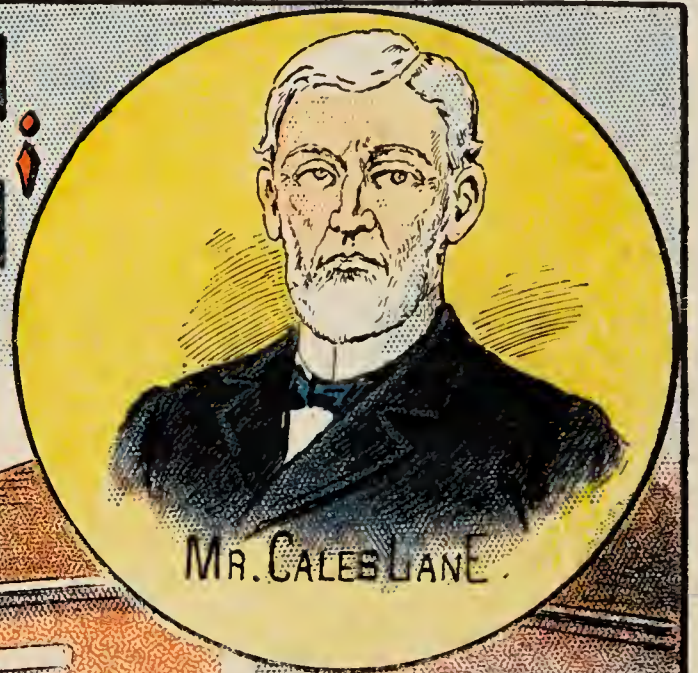
Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS IN HIGH LIFE;

OR

THE GREAT SOCIETY MYSTERY.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.



MR. CALEB LANE.

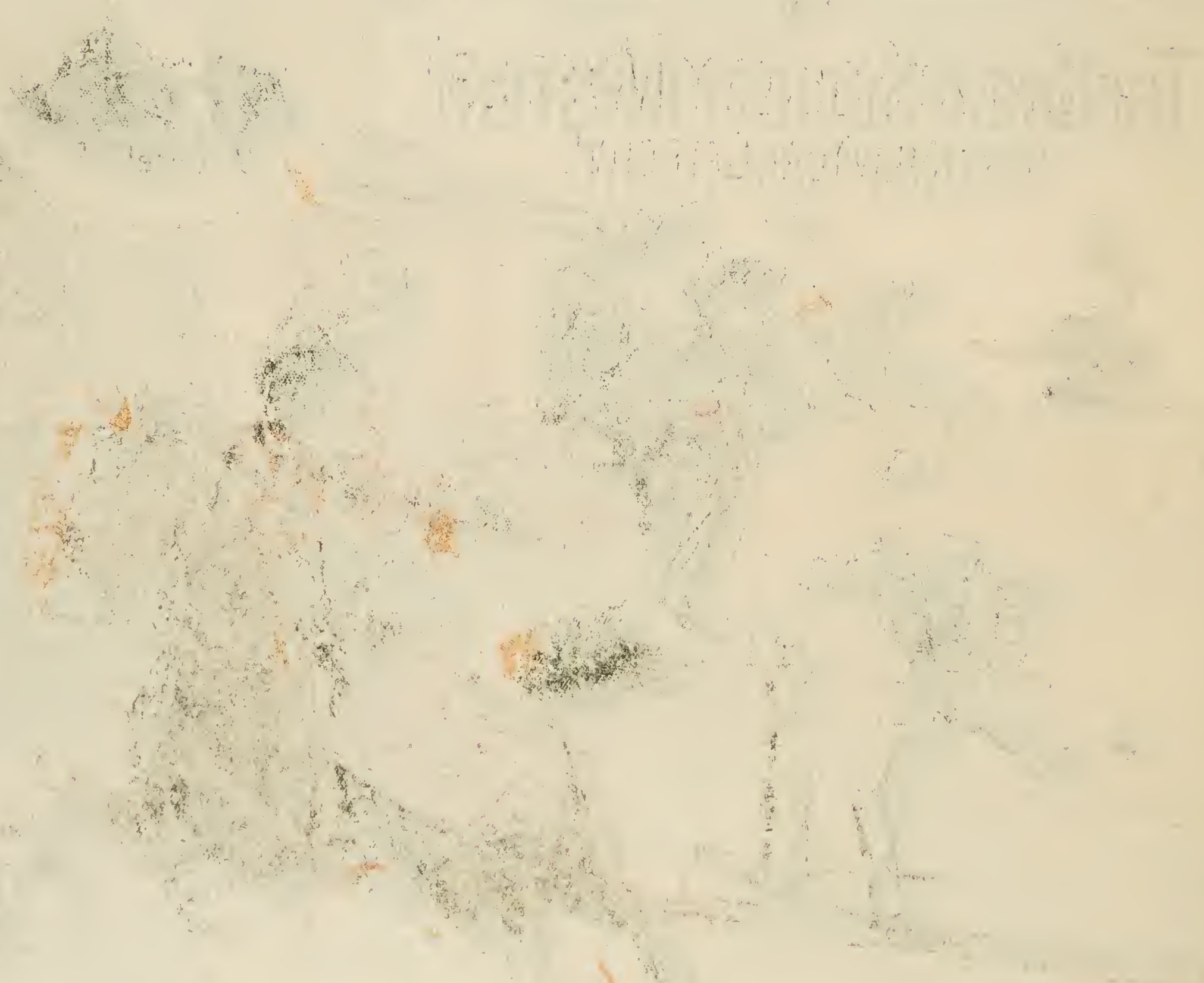


The Bradys were after their quarry like sleuth-hounds. But they were too late. Alvanni, for he it was, had spied a saddle horse hitched to a post. In an instant he had pulled the knot in the rein and vaulted upon the horse's back.

STERN 1912

Die Welt der Zukunft

Ein Buch für die Jugend



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The Bradys in High Life;

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CHAPTER I.

A MYSTERIOUS THIEF.

New York City, the great social and business center of America, had sustained a startling shock in the shape of a number of most scandalous robberies, committed in the most open and barefaced manner, and yet leaving no semblance of a clue whereby detectives could bring the guilty parties to justice.

These crimes, had they been perpetrated in the open street, or anywhere else but the sacred and charmed circles of the most exclusive society, would have attracted but little attention.

Who was the thief?

This was the question which was whispered from one house to another, coupled with a hundred dark and, in many cases, unjust suspicions.

Mrs. Brown-Fiske had lost a fine coronet of diamonds, worth a prince's ransom.

Mrs. Brimley Edgcombe, the wife of the hundred times millionaire, had been deprived of a necklace and four solitaire rings, worth fifty thousand dollars.

Then there were Mrs. Sheridan, the Misses Potts, Duncan Jerrold and a score of others.

All had lost jewels and money, costly laces and articles of priceless value.

A hundred detectives worked silently and secretly on the case.

Every social function, from a pink tea to a coming-out ball, was haunted by these gentry.

But at every such affair somebody lost valuables.

It was a distressing state of affairs.

A mild panic reigned among the society people.

To be sure they were wealthy. The intrinsic value was one thing. But it was not all.

The value of an article of personal adornment is oftentimes established beyond price by its associations.

And so matters were.

Everything possible had been done. Society was confronted with the awesome fact that a thief was in its midst—perhaps more than one.

The fact, and its very air of baffling mystery, imposed a chill upon every social function.

The exclusive ladies of fashion did not feel comfortable with the reflection that one unknown criminal was hovering near them.

They feared that a worse crime might supplement the petty thefts.

And that their fear was well grounded the incidents of this story will prove.

After a third mysterious theft in her own house, Mrs. Brown-Fiske called for her brougham and drove downtown.

She went where ladies of her cult seldom go, down into the business section, near the City Hall.

Here she entered the office of the Chief of the Secret Service.

Before him she laid the whole matter.

"Now I am one of many willing to pay a large reward for the arrest of the thief," she said. "Cannot something be done?"

The Chief smiled.

"My dear madame," he said, "everything possible is being done."

"What do you mean?"

"A number of our detectives have long been at work on this case."

"But they have accomplished nothing."

"No."

"Why not?"

The Chief shrugged his shoulders.

"You can answer that as well as I," he said. "The thief is a man of almost intangible personality. In fact——"

The Chief paused.

"Go ahead," said the society queen. "I know what you would say."

"Then, is it necessary for me to say it?"

"No. Yet I can hardly agree with you. The opportunity, of course, is afforded any member of our set. We have held the same suspicion, and, I have found, misjudged many. But I do not believe the thief is any fashionable kleptomaniac."

"You do not?"

"No."

"Have you any idea?"

"I am sure he is a professional and an adept. In fact, the keenest ever known. The examples of his work show that."

"There is logic in what you say."

"I believe so, and I believe if I was a man and a detective I would get that fellow."

"You speak of an individual."

"I don't believe there are more than one. If there were they doubtless would have been trapped before this."

The Chief was thoughtful.

He recognized the keen sense of the woman before him. She was in a large measure right.

"Now, have you no men fitted to undertake this case?" she asked, "or must I send to Scotland Yard——"

"Pardon me, madame," said the Chief, with dignity. "Scotland Yard has no men equal to our Secret Service sleuths."

"Well, I must do something."

"Wait! I do know of two men who are due here to-day, whom I think can catch this adroit rogue."

Mrs. Brown-Fiske's face lit up.

"I am glad to hear you say that," she said. "It is very encouraging. Who are they?"

"The two Bradys."

Mrs. Fiske gave a little start.

"I have heard of them," she said. "They are a young man and a very old man."

"Yes, one is young and the other old. If they cannot solve the case then I believe it is beyond the power of mortal man to do so."

The lady nodded approvingly.

"You say they will be here to-day?"

"Yes."

"Will you send them to my house, in Fifth Avenue, when they arrive?"

"I will do so."

"Thank you! I feel much encouraged. I have heard of the Bradys and I believe in them. Good-day."

"Good-day, madame."

The door closed and Mrs. Brown-Fiske departed.

The Chief returned to his work. After some time, he called to one of his clerks:

"Smith," he said, "I wish you would go up to the Bradys' lodgings and see if they have returned."

But the words died on his lips.

The office door opened.

Two men entered. The Chief gave a gasp.

"By Jove!" he cried. "How are you, Brady! Hello, Harry! You are just the men I want."

The two men, who saluted the Chief graciously and took seats by his desk, were of more than the ordinary type.

The tall, powerful-framed old man, with the white, close-cropped hair and broad felt hat was the keenest of American detectives.

Old King Brady was peerless in his profession.

The younger man lacked the experience of the elder, but in many respects was his equal.

Together they worked successfully and it was said of them that they had never failed.

"Then you have been expecting us, Chief?" said Harry Brady, the young detective.

"Not only expecting you, but praying for you."

"Well, we are here," said Old King Brady.

"And I am more than glad. I have a case for you."

"A case?"

"Yes."

"We expected that."

"Yes, but this is quite out of the ordinary. In fact, I think you will find it a puzzler."

"Very good," said the old detective. "We shall be pleased to go to work upon it."

"Please state it to us," said Harry.

"I will do so."

The Chief took up his notebook.

"This case deals with high life in New York," he said. "Society is cursed with a mysterious thief. Really, he is a clever one."

With this the Chief gave the Bradys the details of the robberies.

"It is the work of a professional," said Old King Brady.

"So Mrs. Fiske said."

"Well she was right. No novice ever carried out any such game as that."

"Then you will undertake the case?"

"Is it worth while? There are detectives at work on it."

"Yes, but they are unable to do anything with it."

Old King Brady shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, if you really wish it, we will do the best we can."

"What is your opinion of the case?" asked the Chief.

"It is too early to give an opinion. However, I imagine that the thief is in society."

"You mean that he is a member of the elect?"

"Well, he has access to it. If not he could not meet with such success."

"Our detectives have worked on that very same theory. But they cannot locate the man."

"He is too cunning."

The Chief nodded approvingly.

"All right," he said. "You gentlemen can solve this case. I wish you success and hope to hear from you at an early day."

A short while later the Bradys took their leave.

For a day or two they were able to accomplish little. But before the week was out they had a clew.

Every feature, every point was carefully weighed and analyzed.

This had often resulted in an immediate clew.

The detectives had first gone to Mrs. Brown-Fiske's house, as the lady had requested.

She had given them all the assistance in her power.

She described the jewels she had lost and gave a complete list of the invited guests.

Also she gave the name and history of every servant, of the musicians and waiters and, in fact, of all persons who were at her ball.

The room from which the gems were stolen was examined.

Old King Brady made careful note of every detail.

"Now, what do you think?" asked the society leader bluntly.

"Just what I thought at first," said Old King Brady.

"And that——"

"That is that it is the work of an adroit professional thief."

Mrs. Brown-Fiske clapped her hands.

"My idea exactly. He must in some way have gained admittance in disguise."

"Very plausible."

"Then he passed as one of my guests that evening. He must have impersonated some one, for every person was under the surveillance of detectives."

"He no doubt did."

Old King Brady was thoughtful for a time.

Then he inquired:

"When do you expect to give another party?"

The lady shrugged her shoulders.

"Society is at a standstill," she said. "Nobody dares to open their house while this thief is at large."

"But do you not know of any public event which is near at hand at which society people will congregate?"

"The opera."

"Ah, that is it. We will look forward to that."

"Then you think the thief will try his hand on that occasion?"

"It is likely. The opportunity for skilful work will be good."

"A large number of our set have engaged boxes for the event."

"Very good," said Old King Brady. "Now, we want your assistance."

"In what manner?"

"My partner and I must enter society. We will be your proteges. I shall be known as Prince Iverney Scato, of

CHAPTER II.

THE STOLEN DIAMONDS.

Old King Brady always began work on a case by treating it with a process of deduction.

Moscow, and my partner will be Count Vladimir Valdosti. Here are our cards."

Mrs. Fiske's eyes sparkled.

"Splendid," she exclaimed. "It will be a pleasure for me to introduce two such distinguished noblemen."

"We shall play a deep hand."

"Good."

"If the thief is in society, we will find him."

"I believe you."

It was arranged that the detectives should be entertained at luncheon at the Waldorf by Mrs. Fiske and also should be seen making frequent calls at her house.

Drives in the park, dinners at Sherry's and promenades on the avenue would attract the attention of society people in general.

Also a notice in the society column of the newspapers would announce the presence in the country of the two noblemen.

All this was cleverly arranged.

Then the detectives went back to their lodgings.

Here they proceeded to make up for Russians and secured a proper wardrobe.

This was placed in trunks and the two pseudo noblemen, with their baggage, were driven to the Waldorf Hotel.

Here they were assigned an expensive suite of rooms.

In the privacy of the apartments the detectives invented theories and advanced deductions.

"What I would like to know," said Harry, "is what disposition has been made of all these valuable jewels. Have they been pawned?"

"Not in the ordinary pawnshop. They were too valuable and would have excited suspicion at once."

"What then has become of them?"

"Doubtless the gems have been sold."

"Sold?"

"It is a simple matter to take the stones from their settings. The stones could never be identified. The settings could be melted down."

"That is so."

"But there is a chance of finding a clew through Tiffany."

"Ah, how is that?"

"I speak of Tiffany's, as he is the great dealer. Mrs. Brimley Edgecombe lost a very expensive cameo cutting of the Madonna. It was worth five thousand dollars.

"If the thief tried to pawn that at Tiffany's we may be able to get a description of him."

"Why not go down to Tiffany's at once?"

"Very well."

The detectives called a cab and were driven to Tiffany's.

As they entered polite salesmen met them.

But Old King Brady said:

"I wish to see the buyer."

The detectives were at once escorted to the private office of the firm. Here they were waited upon by the diamond experts.

"We have nothing to sell," said Old King Brady, showing his badge. "We are in quest of something."

"Ah, gentlemen," said the head of the firm. "what has been lost?"

"Many diamonds and articles of vertu and art."

"Ah, we have bought very few set stones lately. Can you identify the others?"

"We can identify a magnificent Italian cut cameo, if you have it."

The manager gave a start.

"Wait a moment," he said.

He went to the safe and took out a tray. On it were a number of valuable cameos.

"Can you pick it out?" he said.

"It was marked on the back with interlocked crescents."

"There is one here marked in that way."

"Let us see it."

The detectives carefully examined the cameo. Then Old King Brady said confidently:

"That is the property of Mrs. Edgecombe, I am sure. She purchased it abroad."

"Did she lose such a cameo?"

"Yes."

"How long since?"

"Eight weeks."

"Ah," said the manager. "The record of purchase is six weeks ago. If the lady can identify the cameo it is hers."

"What did you pay for the cameo?" asked Harry.

"Thirty-two hundred dollars."

"I am sorry," said Old King Brady. "But I am sure it is stolen property. I will report to Mrs. Edgecombe and let her establish her ownership."

"And then catch the thief?"

"Yes."

"Have you a clew?"

"No. We hope you can give us one. Who sold you the cameo?"

The expert was thoughtful.

"He gave an Italian name," he said. Giovanni Maduri. That was the fellow. As near as I can remember he was of the peasant type. He cried when he parted with the cameo."

"It was probably assumed."

"Oh, yes; no doubt."

"Do you know where we can find him?"

"I have not the slightest idea."

"Did you suspect him a thief?"

"No. He told a very plausible story. The cameo was an heirloom. It had been in the family generations. Such things are found in Italy."

"I understand. The best we can do then is to set a trap for the thief. He will surely come here again."

"Do you think so?"

"Oh, yes. You are aware of the fact that there have been many thefts at high social functions of late."

"Oh, yes."

"Well, no doubt many of these unset diamonds which you have bought lately are stolen property."

"We are sorry to hear that. We usually take the greatest of care not to become receivers of stolen goods."

"Yes, but you will be deceived."

"Oh, yes."

Just at this moment a clerk entered the office.

"If you please," he said, "a man is waiting in the outer office now with some diamonds for sale."

The expert looked at the detectives, and the Bradys arose.

"I think we have learned all that is possible," said Old King Brady. "We may as well go."

"Well, gentlemen, if I can be of assistance to you——"

Like a flash a thought came to Old King Brady.

He wheeled about.

"I declare," he said; "I have just thought of something."

"Well?"

"A man is here now to sell you some diamonds. Is it not possible that he may be our man?"

The expert looked startled.

"Why—that is so," he agreed. "I shall not buy unless he can give the best of references."

"We will ask a favor."

"What is it?"

"That we may be present while negotiations are in progress."

"I have not the slightest objection."

"If the fellow is in the least suspicious we will arrest him."

"I think it is a capital plan. You may be sure of my co-operation."

"But we shall prefer not to be seen by the visitor. Can we not secure a position from which we can see and not be seen?"

The diamond expert pulled an ornamental screen across the corner of the room.

CHAPTER III.

A STARTLING REVELATION.

"Secrete yourselves behind this," he said. "You can then hear and see all."

The detectives slipped behind the screen.

There was a mirror at their right hand and in this they could see the rest of the room.

Presently the door opened and the visitor entered.

The detectives fixed their gaze upon him.

Not a detail of his form and dress was lost.

There was nothing about the man which suggested the crook.

He was a mild featured, stoop shouldered little man of about sixty years.

His clothes were of respectable black, but threadbare. His white beard and hair were scrupulously combed.

Certainly no one could pick this man out for a thief.

He was threadbare and shabby genteel. It was plain that he had once been a man of respectable fortune.

Hard luck and disaster were written in every part. Yet he was not a criminal.

However, the Bradys watched him narrowly.

To the detective every man is guilty until proven innocent. To the law every man is innocent until proven guilty.

"I have come upon a matter of business," said the little man. "Here is my card."

"Indeed," said the diamond expert. "Pray be seated."

Then he read the name on the card aloud to the Bradys.

CALEB LANE,

Yonkers, N. Y.,

Dealer in Dry Goods and Fancy Notions.

Old King Brady jotted this down in his notebook.

Then the Bradys listened with interest to the conversation which followed.

"Well, Mr. Lane," said the diamond expert, "what can we do for you?"

"I have some diamonds which I have brought in for examination. I may say that I purchased them of Hobbs, of London, ten years ago, at a large price.

"They were then considered of the finest water. The settings have become so worn that I decided to submit the stones without them. I can furnish the settings if desired, though they are only worth the price of old gold."

The little man drew a small box from his pocket.

There in the cotton reposed the gems.

The expert spread a piece of black velvet on the table.

"I will look at them," he said.

"Here is a good five carat solitaire. I gave fifteen hundred dollars for that," said Lane.

"Here are two ear jewels, and these smaller stones were taken from a brooch. I would like to dispose of them at a fair price.

"I have had reverses in fortune and I shall need the money. My wife has agreed to part with her gems."

"You are a business man in Yonkers, I see?"

"Yes."

"Have you a rating? Pardon me the question, but in purchasing gems we require from all alike some necessary references."

"That is eminently proper. Yes. I am rated in Bradstreet's at ten thousand dollars."

"Ah!"

The diamond buyer took down a copy of the report and turned the pages over.

"Ah, yes. Caleb Lane, Merchant, of Yonkers, \$10,000. Very good, Mr. Lane. I will send the diamonds to our lapidary and ascertain their water and their value."

Mr. Lane settled back in his chair.

The diamond buyer touched a bell. A clerk responded.

"Take these gems out for an examination," he said.

"Bring me the report."

The clerk departed.

Mr. Lane and the buyer conversed in a casual way. The Yonkers merchant knew the diamond houses of London and Paris well.

Soon the clerk returned.

The buyer scanned the report.

"The five carat stone is very fine," he said. "The solitaire is all right, and so are the eardrops. The smaller stones have a value."

Mr. Lane nodded.

"Yes," he said. "I knew you would find the stones all right. What will you offer for them."

The buyer was thoughtful.

"I would rather not put a price on these gems to-day," he said.

Mr. Lane was surprised.

"Why not?" he asked.

"We have been buying to our limit and I must consult the other members of the firm. If you will come in at this time to-morrow I will give you an answer."

The seedy little man arose.

He seemed much disappointed.

"I would not offer these gems for sale if I did not urgent-

ly need the money," he said. "It nearly broke my wife's heart."

"I think there is no doubt but that we will purchase. Come in to-morrow."

"I will do so."

"Good-day."

The door closed behind the little man. The Bradys came out from their concealment.

"What did you think?" asked the buyer eagerly.

The detectives looked puzzled.

"I hardly know," said Old King Brady. "He appeared to be all straight."

"If he isn't he is the best fake I ever saw."

"I should say."

"Yet, he may be a crook. My purpose in putting him off until to-morrow was to look him up."

"A good idea, and that is just what we will do."

"Very well."

"My idea is to run up to Yonkers and make sure that he is the Caleb Lane he pretends to be. That may be a fictitious character."

"Certainly."

"If we find he has told the truth, that ends it. If not, we will lay for him to-morrow and risk an arrest."

"That is the best possible plan."

Harry agreed to this.

"On the whole," said Old King Brady, "I think our best way to get a clew is to shadow every man who comes in here with diamonds to sell."

"That is a very good plan, for the real thief must come sooner or later."

"Yes."

The detectives left Tiffany's.

Later in the day they took a train to Yonkers.

They walked up to Getty Square. There was the sign over a modest-looking store:

CALEB LANE,

Dealer in Dry Goods and Fancy Notions.

"By Jove!" said Harry. "There is certainly the store."

"That is right."

The two detectives walked up to the door and then entered.

Leaning over the counter and showing some dress goods to a lady was the proprietor himself.

Caleb Lane, the same little, seedy man, whom they had seen in Tiffany's.

They were about to turn away, when Old King Brady said:

"We might as well make sure."

"Waiting until Mr. Lane was at liberty, Old King Brady saluted him.

"Is this Mr. Lane?"

"It is."

"Ah, you were in Tiffany's early in the day, were you not?"

Caleb Lane placed a hand to his ear.

"Eh?" he asked.

The question was repeated.

"In Tiffany's?" he exclaimed. "I think not. I have not been out of my store to-day."

The detectives were dumbfounded.

They looked at each other.

"Sold!" said Harry.

"We are quite sure we saw you there," said Old King Brady. "This gentleman was your counterpart and had your card."

Caleb Lane looked incredulous.

"You must be mistaken," he said. "I haven't any diamonds to sell. In fact, I never owned a diamond in my life, and, as for my wife, I am not married."

That settled it.

The Bradys hastened back to New York. They reported at Tiffany's the next day, as they arrived too late that evening.

"We have the elew," cried Old King Brady exultantly. "When our bogus Mr. Lane comes to-day we will nab him."

"By Jove!" exclaimed the diamond buyer. "It is lucky I did not buy his diamonds."

"You are right, but we will get him to-day. That he is the real thief or in partnership with him there can be no doubt."

"What a shrewd trick to impersonate Caleb Lane!"

"Indeed, yes. But he could not have picked out a better subject. You might have been fooled."

"I should have been but for your visit."

"What if he is, indeed, the real thief?" cried Harry exultantly. "That will be the best of luck."

The detectives waited for the reappearance of the bogus Caleb Lane.

Somehow it had not occurred to them that he would not come.

Nor did he.

The bogus Caleb Lane, the possible thief of high society, did not put in his appearance.

It was then that the Bradys became aware of the fact that they were on the trail of a slippery rogue.

That he should have taken the alarm so easily proved what a shrewd rascal he was.

It was too late to regret that they did not arrest him the day before.

The Bradys were defeated.

They realized this, but did not lose courage.

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE OPERA.

The Bradys haunted Tiffany's several days.

But no more suspicious men with gems to sell showed up.

It was evident that the crooks had got a scare.

Old King Brady said grimly:

"All right! There is another way we can get at them."

They now returned to their quarters at the Waldorf and resumed the roles of Russian noblemen.

The opera was to begin that evening, and a large house was to be assured the company.

All the élite of New York would occupy the boxes. No better chance could be offered an adept thief.

Prince Iverney and Count Vladimir received an invitation from Mrs. Fiske to occupy her box.

So the two pseudo noblemen, made up to the best, sallied forth to spend the evening at the opera.

When they arrived at the opera house they went at once to Mrs. Fiske's box.

She was there with a bevy of young people. She received the two noblemen graciously and introduced them all around.

In the box was a tall, olive-hued Italian, named Count Alvanni.

The Bradys at once bestowed their attention upon the fellow.

He was one of the low-voiced, fawning, flattering sort, who are always shining in the light of somebody else's sun.

There was a mutual dislike at once between him and the Bradys.

But the detectives gave him little heed. They chatted with Mrs. Fiske and looked on at the play for a while.

Then they sauntered in the foyer and kept an eye on all of the boxes.

They identified every person in the tier of boxes, watched them narrowly and drew their conclusions.

But they were ready to swear that no sneak thief or any man outside the regular social élite had passed in or out of the boxes.

Count Alvanni went home early, excusing himself with the plea of a headache.

The play finally was ended. The divine Patti had sung her last stanza and the curtain slowly fell.

People arose to leave their boxes. There was the usual chatter and gossip.

But the Bradys saw that something was wrong in the Jerrold box. They at once went thither.

"I have lost my bag of jewels," declared Miss May Jerrold in a distracted way. "Oh, it is terrible. How could it have been stolen?"

"Who sat in this box with you?" asked Old King Brady.

The young girl flushed.

But she made reply:

"My brother Duncan was with me all the evening, save for a brief spell, when Count Alvanni sat with me."

"Did nobody else enter or leave the box?"

"Oh, an usher and my footman. I can suspect neither."

The Bradys exchanged glances. Of course in their present guise of Russian noblemen they could not assume the case.

But Old King Brady managed to say:

"I am very sorry for you. I had a similar experience in St. Petersburg. Perhaps I can be of assistance."

"You are very kind. Do you not think I had better call a detective?"

"At once," suggested the old detective. "In the meanwhile the Count and I will do the best we can."

So the two detectives made inquiries of the attaches of the tier of boxes and also searched the box itself.

By this time the opera house was nearly emptied.

The Bradys saw that nothing could be done at present.

The thief had successfully carried out his game and made his escape. Not a clew was left behind him.

When the detectives rejoined Mrs. Brown-Fiske in the lobby she looked inquiringly at them.

"Well," she asked, "what did you find?"

"Nothing," replied Harry.

"Was there no robbery?"

"Oh, yes. Miss Jerrold has lost her diamonds."

"Mercy! Is there no clew?"

"Not the slightest."

"Get in my carriage and drive home with me," said Mrs. Fiske. "I want to consult with you."

The Bradys complied.

They entered the carriage and were driven to Mrs. Fiske's Fifth Avenue mansion.

They were soon seated in the reception room.

The society leader was much excited. She closed the doors and also the window blinds.

It was near the hour of midnight, and but few of the

servants were astir. But, as she declared, she wished to be on the safe side.

"Now," she said, "tell me all about it. What did Miss Jerrold have to say?"

"Very little," replied Old King Brady. "Simply that she had been robbed of her jewels."

"Could she give no clew?"

"Not the slightest."

"Humph! What do you think of it?"

Old King Brady looked at Harry and then said:

"Without any allusion to this affair, Mrs. Fiske, I would like to ask if you know a certain Count Alvanni?"

Mrs. Fiske gave a start.

"Oh, yes," she said. "I have known the Count for a year. He is an Italian importation. I believe Mrs. Martin-Bradley is responsible for him."

"Ah, what sort of a fellow is he?"

"Very courteous and unassuming. I know very little about him, to tell the truth. I believe he is very popular with certain ladies."

The detectives again exchanged glances.

"Can you tell us where he lives?" asked Harry.

"Certainly! I think he has bachelor apartments at No. — West Thirty-fifth Street."

Then Mrs. Fiske gave the detectives a searching gaze.

"What?" she half whispered. "It is not possible that you suspect him? Ah, I recollect. He was in the Jerrold box for a while. I recall it now."

"Madame," said Old King Brady, "Count Alvanni may be as innocent as a babe, but detectives always look with suspicion upon all who are so fortunate as to have exclusive opportunity. That was his."

"Alvanni!" exclaimed Mrs. Fiske. "My goodness! Can it be that he is the rascal? On my word, I have little faith in these Italian counts. It is too easy to secure a title in that land of indolence."

"We can only say this," said Old King Brady, "every person who entered the Jerrold box is under suspicion, without respect to rank."

"That is proper!"

"We shall do our best."

"I have no doubt of it."

"We need not impress upon you the necessity of absolute secrecy."

"You may be sure of that."

The Bradys arose to leave.

Mrs. Fiske's eyes shone.

"Really," she said earnestly, "I would not be a bit surprised if Alvanni was the rogue. I am in a position to do a

little detective work on my own account. Henceforth, I assure you, our friend Alvanni is under suspicion."

"If you get a certain clew kindly let us know."

"I will do so."

"Good-night."

The detectives went at once down to the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. As they were entering the lift, however, a bellboy placed a card in Harry's hand.

"The gentleman told me to give you this when you came in," said the boy.

The Bradys glanced at the name and gave a start.

COUNT DOMINICO ALVANNI.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Harry. Then he turned to the boy.

"How long ago was he here?"

"About twenty minutes."

"Did he leave no other word?"

The boy looked wise.

"No," he said. "But if you wants to know where he is——"

Old King Brady pressed a dollar into the boy's hand.

"That is what we want," he said.

"Well, I think you'll find him at Canfield's, up in Fortieth Street. He plays a heap up there. Mebbe he thought you'd like a whack at rouge et noir."

The Bradys turned away from the lift.

In that instant their minds were made up.

"Do ye know where Canfield's is?" asked the boy.

"I think we can find it."

"All right, boss. I wish ye good luek."

The two detectives leisurely crossed the office and lit cigars.

Then they walked out of the hotel on the Thirty-fourth Street side.

"Well," ejaculated Harry. "What do you think of that?"

"I'm dumbfounded," said Old King Brady. "I don't see what the fellow's game can be."

"Has he penetrated our disguise?"

"Why should he?"

"I don't know. But if he is a dangerous crook——"

"We do not know that he is."

"Very true."

The detectives were puzzled beyond expression. At Canfield's place, one of the most exclusive gambling houses in New York, it was necessary to have a password.

But the Bradys had long possessed this open sesame, and were able to enter.

They found a large number of well-dressed gentlemen there engaged in roulette and other games.

But Alvanni was not there.

The Bradys were disappointed.

They were compelled after a while to return to the hotel. Then they looked for the bellboy who had given them the card.

He could not be found.

However, it was possible that he was off duty.

CHAPTER V.

SEARCHING FOR A CLEW.

The Bradys went to their rooms and prepared to retire.

The day had not been devoid of incidents, but they were plunged more deeply into mystery than ever before.

Why had Alvanni sought them out?

What had become of the bellboy? Were the detectives known to the mysterious crook?

No answer to these questions could be had.

There seemed no better way than to let events take their course and wait for results.

The thief would likely try to dispose of the stolen goods.

There were diamond brokers in Maiden Lane whom the Bradys believed would be apt to receive some of the booty.

There was a good chance yet of trapping the thief.

So the detectives turned in and slept soundly.

The next morning they descended to breakfast. Already cards were beginning to arrive with special dinner invitations.

For the two Russian noblemen had attracted notice, and with the endorsement of Mrs. Fiske anything was within their reach.

But they ignored these.

The morning newspapers had a graphic account of the opera, and mentioned the mysterious theft of Miss Jerrold's jewels.

The efforts of Count Valdasti and Prince Seato to find the thief were also recorded.

"It is to be hoped that the detectives will bestir themselves and make an effort to entrap this mysterious society thief who has enriched himself in the last year," the account read. "All efforts so far seem to have had no effect. Perhaps the rogue has police protection, that fad of New York's latter-day regime."

The Bradys smiled as they read this. Then Harry said:

"Well, partner, this is slow work. What shall we do?"

"It is a slow game we are playing."

"You are right."

"But I think we shall win, Harry. You must not be impatient. We are feeling our way just now."

"I wish we might go ahead more rapidly."

"Well, so do I. But our time will come."

"Are we to hang about this hotel all day?"

"No. I think we are justified in looking in upon Count Alvanni for a moment. His friendly call upon us demands recognition."

"Good," agreed Harry. "That will suit me well."

"Then you agree to it?"

"I do."

With this the two pseudo noblemen sauntered out upon the street.

They betook themselves at once to Thirty-fifth Street.

They found the bachelor apartment house.

They sent up their cards and waited. In a few moments the reply came back.

"The Count is out."

"Too bad," said Old King Brady. "We might call on Mrs. Fiske."

At this moment a hatchet-featured, keen-eyed, weazened little Italian stood smiling and scraping before them.

"I am Pietro Gazzini. I am the Count's valet," he said smoothly. "I shall serve you, seigneurs. What word shall I speak to the Count when he shall return?"

The Bradys looked at Gazzini. Had they met him un-awares they would have formed no other conviction than that he was a thorough-faced scoundrel and criminal.

Every line of his face showed duplicity and the hardihood of an evil nature.

For a moment the leering little valet peered into their faces.

Then Old King Brady said:

"Convey our gratitude to Count Alvanni for the kindly interest shown to two strangers from a foreign land."

"Ah, the seigneurs are from abroad?" asked the valet.

"We are from Russia."

"You speak the Anglaise well."

"We were trained as linguists."

"Good! You will stay in America?"

"We cannot say."

"Ah, the Count will be so glad. He will show you all. He loves his countrymen, but he loves all from beyond the sea. These Americans! They are pigs, seigneurs! You shall see how my Count tramples on them."

"Ask your master to call on us soon again," said Old King Brady. "And here is for your service."

He tossed the fellow a coin. Gazzini grovelled at his feet.

He made many protesations, but the Bradys were disgusted and walked away.

When they had again reached the Waldorf Old King Brady turned to Harry and said:

"Alvanni is the thief."

The young detective's eyes glittered.

"You think so?"

"I do."

"I trust you are a prophet."

"You shall see."

The detectives entered the hotel. They hung about the place watching all who came and departed.

After lunch hour they then made their way downtown. They dropped quite casually into Tiffany's.

In a few moments they were closeted with the expert, whom they had met formerly.

"Yes," said that gentleman, "I read of the robbery at the opera. But I have not seen the jewels."

"The thief has not appeared?"

"No."

"Then we have nothing to gain here."

"I enjoy your company. Perhaps by waiting you may get your man."

"The chances are too vague. By the way, do you know a certain Count Alvanni, of Milan, Italy?"

The expert was thoughtful.

"An Italian Count?"

"Yes."

"He lives in bachelor apartments in Thirty-fifth Street."

"That is the man."

"Well, I have met him. I once bought some stones of him."

The Bradys shot comprehensive glances at each other.

"Then he has sold diamonds here?"

"Yes."

"We are glad to know of it."

"Do you suspect him?"

"We suspect everybody within the bounds of reason. Count Alvanni may be the most honest man in the world."

"I understand you," said the expert quietly. "If he comes here again I will let you know."

"Pray do so."

The detectives took their leave.

"What do you think of that?" said Harry triumphantly.

"We are getting the threads to make the rope."

"And it will hang——"

"Alvanni?"

"It looks so."

The Bradys crossed Union Square. The day had passed and the lights of the city were twinkling forth.

Just as they entered the little park Harry eluted Old King Brady's arm.

"Look!" he said.

Both detectives saw a shambling figure making its way across the park.

It needed but a glance to assure recognition.

It was Gazzini.

"Where is he going?"

"Is it of any importance?"

"Let us follow him and see."

So the detectives proceeded to skilfully shadow Gazzini.

The valet turned down Fourteenth Street and continued on toward Third Avenue.

He turned the corner and the detectives were close behind him.

Suddenly the fellow paused before the entrance of a saloon.

He looked up and down the street for a moment.

Then he entered the place.

The Bradys now were stumped.

They were dressed in the fashionable clothes which their life at the Waldorf demanded.

To enter a barroom of this class would be sure to attract attention to themselves.

And this they knew it was wise to avoid.

They, however, were not long at a loss for an expedient.

Stepping into a dark hallway they turned their coats inside out. They were so constructed as now to give them a shabby appearance.

They ruffed the fur upon their silken hats and dented them a trifle. They now passed for shabby genteel.

In this guise they entered the saloon.

They saw Gazzini at the bar. He was drinking with a companion.

And this companion at once claimed the detectives' attention.

He looked strangely familiar.

"Where have we seen him before?" whispered Harry.

"By Jove! I have it," exclaimed Old King Brady.

"Well?"

"He is Caleb Lane."

"The deuce! You mean the bogus Caleb Lane."

"Yes."

"He is the fellow. That settles it. We have the straight lead at last."

The Bradys had certainly good reason to feel exuberant.

They had located the birds to a certainty. It was easy to establish the line.

First, Alvanni, no doubt the ringleader. Then Gazzini,

the valet, and this little old man, who could make up so cleverly for the Yonkers merchant.

Nothing could be clearer.

Alvanni was the thief.

Under the cloak of respectability it was easy for him to steal and be unsuspected.

The valet and the fence, for such the little man was, disposed of the stolen goods.

What could be clearer? The Bradys were truly exultant.

CHAPTER VI.

PLAY AND COUNTER-PLAY.

Gazzini and the little old man stood a long while at the bar in earnest consultation.

The Bradys sat at a table and pretended to drink beer.

But they kept a close watch on the two suspects all the while.

They were unable to hear what was said. But they were assured from certain gestures that it concerned the secret robberies.

Suddenly Gazzini shook hands with the little old man and started to leave the saloon.

"Shall we follow him?" whispered Harry.

"No," said Old King Brady. "The other is our bird."

"So I think."

They allowed Gazzini to depart. Then the little old man drank again and started for the door.

"Go after him," said Old King Brady. "I will overtake you."

Harry obeyed and followed the diamond "fence" out of the saloon.

Old King Brady sauntered up to the bar and said:

"Can you tell me the name of the old gentleman who just went out?"

"Do ye mean the old cove with the white hat?" asked the saloonkeeper.

"Yes."

"Oh, that's old John Balding. He is one of the slickest men at his biz in this city. He served six years once."

"What is that?"

"Diamond jerking! Nobody but his pals know him around here. But I know him all right."

"Ah, then he is not a New Yorker?"

"Naw! He's a Johnny Bull, from London. The English detectives would like to get him."

"Why don't the New York detectives get after him?"

"Oh, I suppose they ain't got no charge agin him. It's the only reason I know of."

Old King Brady bought some cigars and walked out.

He had seen through the glass door that Harry had turned down the street, and after rapidly walking a block he sighted him ahead.

He quickly overtook him.

"Well, partner," he said, "I've got the old fellow's name."

"What is it?"

"John Balding."

"Queer we never heard of him. He is not in the Rogues' Gallery."

"No; he's an English crook. But we will know him now."

"Well, I should say."

Balding walked on until he finally entered the Bowery. He kept on to the corner of Bayard Street.

Down this wretched thoroughfare he turned.

The Bradys now made haste to draw closer. But just then an unfortunate incident occurred.

This street is the home of the low class Italians.

From a drinking saloon some brawlers now burst forth.

They filled the street in a twinkling. The Bradys tried to get through the throng and keep Balding in sight.

But they were balked.

The English crook disappeared. No trace of him could be found, though the detectives explored every street in the vicinity.

It was a keen disappointment.

But it could not be helped.

After an hour's ineffectual search, the detectives turned their coats and assuming once more their fashionable attire cut through to Broadway and took an uptown car.

In due time they reached the hotel.

They made their way at once to the dining hall.

As they entered they were accorded a surprise.

At a table sat Mrs. Brown-Fiske, Miss Jerrold and Count Alvanni.

For a moment the Bradys experienced a peculiar sensation.

They were well aware of the fact that these fashionable society ladies had no suspicion of Alvanni's vile character.

But the Bradys felt an irresistible desire to place the handcuffs on him at once.

But they restrained this.

The time for action had not yet come.

As they entered Alvanni and the ladies looked up.

At once the Count arose, with exaggerated politeness. The ladies smiled and beckoned the pseudo noblemen.

Of course the detectives played their part well.

They were exceedingly gallant to the ladies, frank and cordial with Alvanni.

"There is plenty of room at our table. You shall dine with us," said Mrs. Brown-Fiske.

"We shall be honored," said Alvanni.

"You have already honored us, my dear sir, by a call," said Old King Brady. "We hope you will duplicate it."

"And my regrets are in order that I was not at home when you called at my apartments," said Alvanni.

Many courteous remarks were exchanged and the party at once fell into a jovial discussion.

Miss Jerrold was one of the most beautiful and attractive girls in New York society.

The Italian Count fawned upon and flattered her. It was plain that he was trying to win her esteem.

Harry Brady was a handsome young fellow, and could make himself fascinating to the fair sex when he chose.

So he entered the lists at once.

The result was that the Italian was speedily distanced.

Alvanni bit his lip and a dark light glowed in his eyes.

Meanwhile Mrs. Fiske and Old King Brady had been indulging in secret telegraphy.

Alvanni was their subject.

The clever society woman was now deeply interested in this game, which was bound to land somebody in Sing Sing.

Surely no stranger dinner party ever graced the charming café of the swell hostelry.

While on the surface all was frank geniality and good cheer, beneath there was subtle purpose and keen deception.

One in the party was innocent of this.

This was Miss Jerrold.

Old King Brady managed to convey to Mrs. Fiske the fact that a valuable clew had been gained.

After a while her carriage was announced and the party arose.

"I trust, Prince Scato, you will call in the morning," said Mrs. Fiske in a soft tone.

"I will endeavor to."

The gentlemen saw the ladies to the carriage.

Then they turned back into the hotel. Alvanni was all cordiality.

"You are singularly good Americans in your speech, gentlemen," he said. "You must have had a good tutor."

"There are many such in Russia. We were taught in childhood," said Old King Brady.

"Ah, well, I am glad to welcome anyone from across the sea," said Alvanni. "When one is in a foreign land one appreciates friends."

"Indeed, that is true."

"I suppose you find plenty of diversion?"

Harry feigned a yawn.

"Such as it is," he said. "I like Paris better, or Monte Carlo."

The Count's eyes glittered.

"You like play?"

The Bradys feigned deep interest.

"Ah, yes; the laws forbid here."

"Nevertheless, they play and for heavy stakes," said Alvanni eagerly. "I shall be glad to take you into a fine establishment."

"This hour?"

"When you choose."

The Bradys feigned delight.

"I love roulette," said Old King Brady. "I was lucky in Paris. Perhaps I shall also be so in New York."

"Who can say?" agreed Alvanni. "It is now nine of the clock. Shall we go so early?"

"We will chat first," said Harry. "Let us go to the smoking parlor. You shall tell us of Italy."

"The fairest land on earth," said Alvanni with enthusiasm. "At least it is so to me, for my ancestors sleep there under the shadow of Vesuvius."

"We hope to some day see your boasted Naples and Rome."

"You will agree that Naples is the finest city in the world."

"You are loyal to your own nation." *

"No, I speak plainly. But you shall see for yourself some day. Ah, these Americans are such pigs."

"Why do you so bitterly decry America? Do you not find your livelihood here?"

Alvanni started as if given a blow.

His swarthy face flashed and he shot a quick, searching glance at the two pseudo noblemen.

Then he said stiffly:

"Your pardon, seigneurs. No one of the name of Alvanni has to seek a livelihood."

"Your pardon we beg," said Old King Brady quickly. "We know not your ways, in Italy. We are Russians."

"And do your Russian noblemen stoop to trade?" asked Alvanni with dignity.

"It is not considered stooping," said Harry. "The Russian nobility are all capital tradesmen. They emulate their great ancestor, Peter the Great."

Alvanni quietly lit a cigar.

"The Italian noblemen cannot sacrifice their nobility in such a way," he said. "But the world is not all alike."

"We find that so."

"And America differs from all the rest."

"You seem to flourish here."

Again Alvanni's face flushed. He looked sharply at the Bradys.

But their eyes were open and wondering. There was no sign of an intention to insult.

"You do not know," he said, rising. "But come, gentlemen. To the play."

CHAPTER VII.

CATCHING A ROGUE.

The Bradys allowed Alvanni to lead them from the hotel. The night air was clear and refreshing. Crowds of people thronged the streets.

The detectives quickly ascertained that it was Alvanni's purpose to take them to Canfield's.

They understood the Italian's game at once.

It was easy enough to see that he was fully convinced that he had caught a couple of "suckers."

He thought it would be an easy matter to decoy the two Russians into Canfield's and fleece them.

His rascally nature was thus plainly revealed.

The Bradys now began to speculate on the outcome of the affair.

They had little money with them. But that could be easily remedied.

So they entered Canfield's place with the society thief, for such they knew him to be.

They played roulette a while with varying success.

Then Alvanni decoyed them to a corner table and initiated them into the game of three card monte.

Alvanni manipulated the cards.

The Bradys bet readily and largely. At times they won, but they more often lost.

And when they lost it was for a large sum. When they won it was for a small amount.

Thus they whiled away the time until midnight.

Then Old King Brady yawned and signified his intention of going back to the hotel.

"You owe me nine hundred dollars," said Alvanni complacently. "Will you settle now?"

"Ah, yes," said Harry confusedly. "We will pay, but we have not money enough."

"Oh, you haven't?"

"No. We are very sorry. You will give us credit?"

"At least give me an I. O. U.," said Alvanni.

"Very well."

The promise to pay was written out and signed with the Russian names. Then the party left Canfield's.

"You will call upon us again?" asked Old King Brady.

Alvanni kicked his heels in a self-satisfied way and replied:

"Oh, yes. I'll not neglect you. Of course you are going to the Valentine Ball? All the best people will be there."

"We hope to," said Old King Brady. "Do we part here?"

"Yes. I go to my apartments. I wish you good-night."

"Good-night."

Alvanni hastened away, whistling cheerily.

"He might not feel so gay if he knew the value of that I. O. U.," laughed Old King Brady.

"He is a deep-dyed scoundrel."

"So he is."

"But we shall catch him yet. And when we do——"

"It means Sing Sing."

"Yes."

The Bradys went back to the Waldorf. They were satisfied with their day's work.

Seated in chairs before a cheery grate fire, they discussed the situation.

"For my part," said Old King Brady, "I am very well satisfied."

"So am I."

"We only need a little more evidence to put our birds behind bars."

"That will be a victory."

"Indeed it will."

"The best detectives in the country are working on this case. If they knew as much as we know——"

"They would hardly give Alvanni so much rope."

"That is true. But I want to make a sure case."

"It is a better way."

"Will there not be a social shock when the gallant Count Alvanni is put behind bars?"

"I should say so."

The next day the detectives were astir early.

They again visited Tiffany's.

They found the diamond buyer in a state of much excitement.

"I have got something for you this time," he said.

"What?" asked Old King Brady.

A fellow came in here yesterday whose description answers that given us by you of the valet Gazzini.

"Indeed?" cried the Bradys, much interested.

"It is true, and what do you think he wanted."

"I cannot imagine."

"He had some diamonds to sell. There seem to be heaps of diamonds on the market just now."

"He was sent by Alvanni?"

"Yes. He told a plausible story. The stones were heirlooms and so forth. We took it all in."

"And the diamonds?"

"He was to bring them in to-day. I put it off so that you could be here," said the expert.

"Very considerate of you," said Old King Brady. "We will take a look at this fellow when he comes."

"I would beg of you to do so. I think an arrest would be all right."

"We will see."

Just then the clerk announced a visitor.

The Bradys took up their former hiding place, behind the screen. They watched and waited.

Before going to Tiffany's they had visited their lodgings and, removing their disguise, adopted their own characters again as detectives.

So they would never have been recognized as the two Russian noblemen sojourning at the Waldorf.

The door now opened and the clerk ushered in the visitor. It was Gazzini.

The valet entered with a cringing manner and spoke in a voice a little above a whisper.

"Ah, signor," he said deprecatingly, "I hope you are willing to look at my jewels to-day. I must have money, for I must go back to Italy to my wife, for she is dying."

"I will look at your gems," said the expert. "Pray place them here in the light."

Gazzini drew a little phamois bag from his pocket.

Out upon the black velvet he dropped a number of glittering gems.

The expert examined them closely.

"Why," he said, "these are of very fine water. Are they the same that you brought here yesterday?"

"They are the same, signor."

"Where did you get them?"

The expert looked at Gazzini critically.

The shifting gaze of the valet was fixed upon the floor.

"Ah, signor, mine was a wealthy family. Always we have lived in Florence and always we have had money. We have never parted with our gems. I am the last to inherit and now I must sell them to go home to my dying wife."

"That is a sad story."

"The signor is kind."

"Let me see," said the expert quietly. "Is not your name Gazzini?"

The valet gave a start.

He flashed one searching glance at the other. For a moment a livid hue came to his cheeks.

"No. I am Antonio Gaspardi. We are an old family of Florence."

"Indeed! You strangely resemble Gazzini. He is not a relative?"

Gazzini shrugged his shoulders.

"I know him not," he said.

"I may be mistaken," persisted the expert, "but are you not a valet?"

Gazzini straightened up. An inquiring and dangerous light was in his eyes.

"I have served," he said. "It was necessity. You do not hold that a disgrace in this country."

"No; we do not. Who was your master? Was it not Count Alvanni?"

Gazzini smiled in a sickly way.

"Why ask you these questions?" he said, reaching forward with his hand to recover the gems. "Signor will not buy my gems?"

The expert swept the gems into a little tray. This he placed upon a shelf behind him.

"I shall not buy, my friend," he said quietly, "until you have told me where you got those diamonds."

Gazzini's face turned a ghastly hue. He quivered like an aspen. His eyes shone like live coals.

"Perditi!" he hissed. "Will you steal my gems? Give them back."

"Not until I have investigated this matter a little," said the expert firmly. "I believe you are Gazzini and that you are a thief and that your master is the same."

Fierce curses escaped the lips of the astonished valet.

"I will kill you!" he hissed. "Give me back my gems!"

He crouched like a panther ready for a spring. The expert, however, raised his hand.

A revolver covered the Italian.

"Easy, my friend," said the expert quietly. "I will kill you like a dog if you dare to draw that knife on me."

Gazzini had half unsheathed a gleaming stiletto.

"You will rob me," he hissed. "I want my gems."

"Well, you won't get them. What is more, your game is up."

The signal was given. The Bradys stepped from behind the screen.

In a twinkling Harry had handcuffed Gazzini.

Then Old King Brady faced the cowering and now thoroughly frightened villain.

"Gazzini," he said, "the mask is off. You and your master are known to us. In a very short while Count Alvanni will also be in the Tombs."

Gazzini frothed at the mouth and tried to free his hands.

"No; it's no use. You can't get away. There is only one thing will save you."

The Italian's crafty gaze was turned upon the old detective.

"What is that?" he said.

"You must turn State's evidence upon Count Alvanni."

CHAPTER VIII.

ALVANNI'S TROUBLE.

For a moment Gazzini's livid face underwent a change of expression. He looked out of the high window and thought of liberty.

But, whether from fear of the Count or from sheer audacity, it was hard to say which, he replied:

"No. I have nothing to say. You cannot prove it."

The Bradys knew that this was true enough.

The arrest of Gazzini was in reality a big bluff on their part. They had fancied that he would break down and confess.

They had really no evidence against him, though they knew of his guilt.

But they knew also that the game must be played to the end. So Old King Brady continued his inquisition.

But though Gazzini was given all the degrees, nothing could be got out of him.

He remained true to his master.

"Well, you are the most obdurate fellow I ever saw," said Old King Brady finally. "I guess you need a term in prison."

Then he turned to the diamond expert and said:

"Will you telegraph to police headquarters and have them send a patrol wagon up here?"

Gazzini did not weaken.

He shut his mouth resolutely. Absolutely nothing could be gained from him.

In due time the patrol wagon arrived. The Bradys went to the Tombs and saw Gazzini incarcerated.

He was booked under the name given by him to the expert at Tiffany's. His arrest was to be kept secret.

The Bradys now returned to the Waldorf.

Before going there they went to their lodgings and again donned their make-up as the two Russians.

"It is make or break now," said the old detective. "It remains to be seen what will come of the arrest. I am curious to observe what effect Gazzini's disappearance will have on Alvanni."

"Same here," declared Harry. "I'll wager he'll be puzzled."

So after a luncheon at the hotel the Bradys took a trip around to Alvanni's apartments.

The Count was not in.

The detectives felt curious. They pondered the matter a while.

Finally Old King Brady said:

"I have no doubt he has gone out to look up Gazzini."

"Where would he go?"

"To the retreat where Balding hangs out, no doubt."

"Then we are losing time here."

"Yes."

It did not take the Bradys long to make their way over to the Bowery.

They haunted the resorts of vice, where they might expect to run across Balding.

But without result.

For two days nothing was seen of Alvanni. The detectives did their best to get on his track.

They had begun to fear that their bird had taken the alarm and flown. But one morning Alvanni came into the Waldorf swinging a cane.

"Eureka!" exclaimed Harry. "Where have you been, good friend?"

"I have been in a terrible pickle," said Alvanni, with clouded brow. "I had one of the best valets on earth. I could trust him with all I had. I have him no longer."

"Dead?"

"No, but he might as well be. He has vanished."

"That is distressing."

"Indeed, it is for me. He has carried away some valuable gems of mine."

The detectives were on the alert.

"Then he is a thief."

"No; I can't believe that. I fear foul play."

"Have you notified the police?"

"No. I do not wish publicity. I have a horror of getting my name in print."

"We sympathize with you."

"Thank you! It is pretty hard, as to-night is the occasion of the Valentine Ball, and I need his services."

"We do very well without valets."

"Ah, well; you are fortunate. I could not dress properly without Dominico."

The Count was very much disturbed. He strolled away in an unsocial manner.

"Now is the climax drawing near," said Old King Brady confidently. "I feel sure we shall soon be able to bag the game."

"I hope so."

"Let us shadow him."

This the detectives proceeded to do.

Count Alvanni walked out upon the street finally. The Bradys followed him.

Presently he reached Broadway and crossed over to Sixth Avenue.

He also crossed that thoroughfare and turned into Thirty-second Street.

Here was a music hall of the lower order. Into this place the immaculate Count walked.

The Bradys hesitated at the corner. They dared not follow him into the place in their present make up.

"What shall we do?" asked Harry doubtfully. "What has he gone in there for?"

"No doubt to meet a pal."

"We ought to investigate."

"Yes."

"If we venture into the place he will suspect us."

The Bradys were stalled. They dared not act.

But suddenly the Count came out of the music hall. With him was a little old man.

It was John Balding.

"Ah!" said Old King Brady, drawing a deep breath.

"We need no better evidence."

"He is our man."

"Dead sure."

The temptation was very strong at that moment to encompass the arrest of the Count. But yet the Bradys feared that they could not thoroughly establish his guilt.

"Wait," said Old King Brady. "Everything is working all right."

"If he don't get frightened and fly away."

"Oh, I don't think that. We will watch him closely."

"So we must."

The Bradys now managed to draw quite near behind a wooden sign which jutted out into the sidewalk.

As it chanced the air was that way and brought the words spoken to their ears.

"I don't understand it," the Count was saying. "Where is Gazzini? What has happened to him?"

"I don't see," replied Balding. "He took the gems to dispose of them, did he?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps he did and then took his leave."

"No. I'll not believe that. He had too deep an interest in the whole. He's not a fool. I tell you something is in the air."

"You think so?"

"Yes."

"How do you mean?"

"Why—there's something working against us. I am afraid we will get nipped before we know it."

"Bah! I walk right under the noses of the detectives."

"Well, I don't like the looks of things. If Gazzini don't come back soon—well. I shall find out."

There was a menace in the Count's voice.

Balding gave a start.

"Eh? Curse you, I hope you don't think I know anything about his disappearance."

"I am not saying what I think. But if Dominico don't show up soon I'll find out the reason why."

"Well, ye needn't fling your dirty insinuations in my face," said Balding angrily.

"Nobody dictates to me what I shall do!" snapped Alvanni.

The little old man's figure quivered. He clenched his hands.

"That's an insult," he gritted. "Now you'll pay me that two thousand you owe me on the last deal, or I'll throw up the game."

Alvanni's face grew purple.

"Try it and you die," he hissed.

"You threaten me?"

"Yes. I'll kill you."

Alvanni had lost his temper. He thrust his lean fingers out and clutched Balding's windpipe.

For a moment the little old man's figure seemed to shrink and shrivel. Then like a thunderbolt it darted forward.

Alvanni's grip was broken and he was hurled to the sidewalk as by a Hercules.

Balding stood trembling with rage over him.

"You dirty Italian dog," he hissed. "I've a mind to kill ye."

Alvanni now showed of what stuff he was made.

Cowering and fearful he lay on the sidewalk, waiting the pleasure of his antagonist to arise.

"Get up!" finally Balding said contemptuously. "You and I won't fight in so public a place. But I'll tell ye this: I wash my hands of ye!"

Alvanni scrambled to his feet. He picked up his hat and slunk away like a whipped cur.

Balding pushed through the crowd of spectators and also vanished.

"Well," said Harry. "What do you think of the situation now, partner?"

"It is the old story," declared Old King Brady. "When villainy falls out, look for the gallows."

"I think we shall soon have the game in our hands."

"No doubt of it."

"I don't believe Balding will have anything more to do with the Count. Perhaps if we forced our hand now——"

"Wait," said Old King Brady. "After the Valentine Ball we will act."

CHAPTER IX.

AT THE BALL.

"Why do we wait until then?" asked Harry.

"I think Alvanni has something planned for that occasion."

"Ah, I see."

"It will be in order for us to find out what that is. Maybe we can catch him red-handed."

"If we can——"

"The case is ended. We will arrest him at once. Gazzini is already in the Tombs. It will not be difficult to corral Balding."

The Bradys were in a decidedly improved frame of mind as they strolled into the hotel.

At the desk the clerk gave them a letter.

It was directed to Prince Iverney Scato. Old King Brady broke the seal.

"Ah," he said. "It is from Mrs. Fiske."

"Indeed?"

"I will read it."

The old detective held the scented sheet of note paper up and read:

"My Dear Prince.—Will not you and Count Vladimir call at my house at the earliest moment? I have something of importance to tell you. Very cordially,

"MRS. BROWN-FISKE."

"We will go up there at once," said Old King Brady. "I wonder what it can be?"

The two detectives at once entered a cab and drove to the Fifth Avenue residence of Mrs. Fiske.

That amiable lady met them eagerly in the reception room.

"Ah, gentlemen," she said, "I have news for you."

"We are glad to hear that," said Old King Brady, "and hope it is favorable."

"I hardly know whether it is or not," said Mrs. Fiske dubiously. "It concerns the Count."

"Ah!" exclaimed the detectives.

"I know that you have held him under suspicion."

"Yes."

"Well, he is going to leave us."

"To leave us?"

"Yes; he is going back to Italy."

The detectives were interested.

"When is he going?"

"He has engaged passage on the Bohemia next week."

"Well," said Old King Brady, "I wonder if that is generally known?"

"No. My confidant is a certain young lady whom you know. It also entails another surprise."

The Bradys were absorbed.

"Really," said Harry, "developments are coming thick and fast. Who is this young lady?"

"Miss Jerrold."

The Bradys nodded.

"Ah, he made a confidant of her?"

"No, she made a confidant of me. I am betraying her secret. She is to accompany the count."

The detectives gasped.

They were for a moment speechless.

"What?" exclaimed Old King Brady, finally. "She does not know that we have suspected the count?"

"No."

"Why, she is one of the most highly respected young ladies in society."

"So she is."

"What can it mean? Has he hypnotized her?"

"I verily fear so. She has fallen in love with him, or thinks she has. They are to be secretly married and leave unknown to anybody but me. The reason for such a move is that Miss Jerrold's folks would certainly forbid the marriage."

"And be well warranted."

"Yes."

The Bradys were aghast.

"Did you warn her?"

"No. I thought I had better communicate with you first."

"You were wise, Mrs. Fiske. This has come all in good time. The shock will be a hard one for the young girl, but she will be open to congratulations for her escape."

"Indeed, yes. Then you have gained more evidence —"

"We have his valet in the Tombs. We need only a little further incriminating evidence to land Alvanni there as well."

"Good! I trust you will not give him an opportunity to spirit Miss Jerrold away."

"We shall warn her in time. In the meanwhile, let matters go on as they have. To-night is the night of the Valentine Ball?"

"Yes."

"Well, we will be on hand at that affair. We have reason to believe that Alvanni has a job on hand there. We hope to snare him."

"I wish you success!"

A few moments later the detectives took their leave.

They went back to the hotel.

They seated themselves in their room, and fell into deductions.

It was indeed a revelation that Miss Jerrold was preparing to elope with Alvanni.

"We will save that young girl from a life of misery," said Old King Brady. "I trust she will appreciate it."

"Strange that we observed no intimacy between them."

"Trust a woman for deception in matters of love."

"That is so!"

Soon the Bradys began to dress for the Valentine Ball.

It was to be a swell affair, and would be held in the ball-room of the hotel.

All the elite of New York society would certainly be there, and the Bradys felt sure that Alvanni would make an attempt to secure a good haul on this, his last opportunity.

They were determined to entrap him.

So they dressed themselves with care, and were among the first in the ball-room.

They were immediately surrounded by a coterie of young ladies, who made things lively for a while.

Harry was bright and quick at repartee, so he kept the group in a good humor.

The Russians were voted a success, and soon found themselves the lions of the evening.

But while keeping up the vapid talk and idle jest, the Bradys never for a moment lost sight of their purpose.

They kept a sharp lookout for Count Alvanni.

Mrs. Fiske had arrived, and given the detectives a signal. Miss Jerrold was also on hand.

But the Count did not come.

It was Harry himself who led Miss Jerrold into the first dance.

The party became merry indeed, and the evening waxed old. Yet the Italian nobleman did not appear.

The Bradys were puzzled.

Once they met Mrs. Fiske.

"Where is Alvanni?" she asked.

"I do not understand," said Old King Brady. "It is full time for him to be here."

"I should think so!"

"Can he have taken the alarm and already skipped the country?"

"It cannot be!"

"Yet it is possible. The falling out with Balding, and the disappearance of Gazzini might have given him a start."

"But Miss Jerrold——"

"We will watch her."

"Ah, but I do not think she is aware of Alvanni's whereabouts. She is very much worried."

"Do you think so?"

"I know it."

The Bradys watched the young lady, and found that she was exceedingly ill at ease.

It was now near midnight.

But just then Harry said:

"He has come!"

Old King Brady turned.

Sure enough, there was Alvanni making his way hastily across the floor. He was in evening dress, but his face was strangely white.

The detectives watched him with interest.

"Something is wrong," said Old King Brady. "Where has he been?"

"That is the question!"

The Bradys were interested.

They heard him say to Miss Jerrold, when he offered his arm:

"Do not judge me unkindly. I have had an ill turn, and it was only with the greatest effort that I overcame it sufficiently to come here."

Miss Jerrold murmured words of sympathy. Shortly after Alvanni accompanied her to her carriage.

The Count returned to the ball-room for a short time only.

Then he disappeared.

The detectives were close upon his heels. He entered his room.

He did not come out again that night. To say that the Bradys were disappointed would be a mild statement.

But there had been no robbery of jewels that night.

The detectives had believed that Alvanni would crown his last public appearance with a supreme effort. But he failed to do so.

They were forced to retire a short while later, much disappointed.

"Well, what is to be done now?" said Harry, with sheer disappointment.

"We must keep right along."

"And let him make off with the young lady?"

"Oh, no!"

"Ah, upon what grounds can we hold him?"

"We will arrest him for abduction, if nothing else. I believe we can yet wring a confession from Gazzini."

"I don't."

"Why not?"

"Oh, I tell you that Italian valet is a shrewd chap. He knows he has the best of us."

"The best of us?"

"Yes."

"How so?"

"Why, we cannot convict him. We cannot prove that the diamonds he had were stolen. When his case is brought up the magistrate will discharge him for lack of evidence."

CHAPTER X.

A DARK CRIME.

Old King Brady knew that Harry was right.

The plight in which the detectives now found themselves was by no means a pleasant one.

The arch villain of all was beyond their reach, so to speak, and his tool and accomplice could not be held for lack of evidence.

And yet the Bradys knew that these two men were absolutely guilty.

For a long while they studied the matter most earnestly. Then Old King Brady said:

"If worst comes, we must play a desperate hand. That young girl must not be suffered to elope with that villain."

"She must be saved, at all hazards."

"Yes."

"It seems as if she would be willing to throw him over when she hears of his arrest."

"I don't know. You never can tell what a woman will do."

"That is true."

The Bradys now retired.

They slept soundly for the rest of the night. It was about eight o'clock when they awoke.

They dressed and went down to breakfast.

Harry bought a morning paper.

He was sipping his coffee, when a startling headline in the paper caught his eye.

"Mysterious Murder in the Bowery."

The young detective read as follows:

"The body of a man drenched in blood, and frightfully

stabbed with a knife, was found in a dark alley off Chatham Square at an early hour this morning by Policeman Burtis.

"That it was a murder was beyond doubt. Coroner Hirsch was quickly on the spot, and took charge of the remains. Before they were removed to the morgue, a saloon-keeper in the neighborhood identified them as those of a notorious all round crook and fence known as John Balding.

"Detectives are searching for the murderer. It is believed he is an Italian, as the stiletto found by the body is such as is used by that class."

For a moment after reading this, the Bradys sat aghast.

"That is not hard to understand," said Old King Brady.

"No."

"Balding was murdered by——"

"Alvanni!"

The detectives felt sure of this. The horror of the thing was great.

They recalled now the white face and uneasy manner of Alvanni when he entered the ball-room.

Also they remembered that he had not appeared until almost midnight.

It was easy to assume what the villain's game had been.

He had decided that Balding was a menace to the success of his plans.

For that reason he must be put out of the way.

And he had done the terrible job.

Alvanni, the society thief, was a horrible murderer.

Old King Brady's mind was made up.

He arose.

"Harry," he said, "evidence or no evidence, that fellow must be arrested. He must be locked up on suspicion, if nothing else."

"I believe you. Certainly we can find enough evidence to hold him."

"I think we can. He must not be allowed to take that deluded young girl away with him."

"Never!"

The Bradys acted quickly.

They left the Waldorf, and went at once to the bachelor apartments in Thirty-fifth street.

They applied at the door of Alvanni's apartments.

No amount of rapping brought a response. After a while the janitor appeared.

"Shure, gents," he said, "the Eyetalian has packed up his duds an' skipped. Bad cess to him, but he owes me tin cases."

"Is that so?" said Old King Brady. "Let us into his room."

"Shure, sor, he took the key away wid him."

"That is easily fixed," said Old King Brady, as he put his shoulder to the door and burst it in.

The apartments were in a confused state. Articles of all sorts were tossed here and there.

The departure of the villain had been hasty.

That was plain.

But it was plain that he had taken all articles of value with him. However, the detectives found a heap of gold jewel settings in one of the bureau drawers.

Some of these were marked with the names of the former owners.

"Hurrah!" cried Harry. "Here is the evidence we wanted. Now to catch the thief."

"There is the rub!"

"But he has not got much of a start. We ought to over-haul him."

"He could be half way to Boston ere this."

"Do you think he will go that way? Ah, by Jove! What of the young lady?"

The same thought came to the two detectives. They looked at each other in a startled way.

"There is plenty of time," said Harry. "We can get him yet."

"Not if we hang around here."

They started back to the hotel post haste. As they entered the foyer, a richly-dressed lady rushed up to them.

It was Mrs. Brown-Fiske.

"Oh, gentlemen!" she cried. "I have dreadful bad news. Go at once in pursuit. Oh, there will be a dreadful scandal. Miss Jerrold has disappeared!"

"She has gone!"

"Yes!"

The detectives held up their hands.

"Too late!" they cried. "We ought to have warned her before; but we'll do the best we can. Have you any idea which way they went?"

"James, my coachman, said he saw Cabman No. 209, whose name is Scully, taking them at full speed toward the Grand Central Depot. Ah, there is the cabman now!"

A cab drove into the porte cochere. The detectives rushed out.

They pounced upon the cabman.

"Look here, Scully," said Old King Brady, sternly, "where did you take that Italian and lady this morning? Tell the truth, or it'll be a State's Prison job for you!"

"I dunno," replied the cabby.

Old King Brady showed his star.

"Another lie like that, and up you go, Scully!"

"Wall, I took 'em to the Grand Central Station."

"Which train did they take?"

"I dunno."

"Look out! You checked their traveling bags?"

"Yes."

"Where for?"

The cabman scratched his head.

"What's up?" he said. "I've done nothing wrong!"

"That man is an escaping murderer, and you are an accessory. That's what's the matter!" cried Old King Brady, savagely.

"Gee—a murderer?" gasped the cab driver. "How should I know it? I ain't no accessory. I checked their grip to Quebec."

The Bradys waited for no more. They turned to Mrs. Fiske.

"Keep matters as dark as you can," they said. "We will wire ahead, and try to stop them. We will take the next train after them."

"Oh, poor Genevieve! She was so deceived! She is forever ruined!"

"Perhaps not. We will do the best we can!"

The Bradys lost no time.

They rushed to the depot, and caught an express to Boston.

Telegrams were sent ahead to apprehend the Italian murderer on the train. The Bradys took the first fast train.

But when they rolled into Boston, six hours later, they found that the Northern train had just departed.

If Alvanni and his intended bride were upon it, they would doubtless be arrested before it had gone one hundred miles.

"I think they will get him at Concord, New Hampshire," said Old King Brady. "That is about seventy-five miles from here. We will buy tickets for there."

So extra telegrams were sent to the police of the various cities to wire the Bradys at Concord.

The detectives boarded an express and were soon being whirled across Massachusetts.

They easily traced the probable route of the absconding villain to Quebec.

From Boston he could get through tickets to Quebec, via the Boston and Maine and Quebec Central railroads. Change of cars was made at Newport, Vermont, two hundred and fifty miles distant.

All of the intermediate cities had been wired.

The Bradys could not see how Alvanni could dodge arrest.

When the train made its first stop at Lowell, twenty-five miles from Boston, the detectives alighted a moment and made inquiry.

But no arrest had been made there. The next stop was Nashua, and no arrest had been made there.

At Manchester it was the same; but there the Bradys got a clew.

The conductor of the train by which Alvanni was supposed to be making his way north terminated his run at Manchester.

He was on the platform, and the detectives chanced to accost him.

"If it was two women you was after, I should say they were on my train," the conductor declared. "But I found no man. The women were from New York, for I saw the transfer tag on their traveling bag."

The Bradys were thrilled.

"By Jove, Harry," exclaimed the old detective, "we have been fooled. It never occurred to me that Alvanni would don a disguise."

"He must have done it at Boston."

"Yes!"

"That was his game. In that event we can do little until we get to Quebec."

CHAPTER XI.

A LIVELY CHASE.

"And little there!" said Old King Brady, "without extradition papers."

The detectives were in a perplexed state of mind.

But they had no idea of turning back. Beyond Concord the train crossed over into Vermont.

They had left Haverhill, a station in the Connecticut River Valley, when suddenly there was a jarring sensation, and the air-brakes were set.

The train presently came to a stop.

The detectives, with others, got out to see what the trouble was.

As far as could be seen on the tracks ahead were lines of freight cars.

"The trains are stalled," said the conductor. "The Canadian Pacific express went through a culvert, and the track is blocked."

The Bradys were startled.

"The Canadian Pacific," said Old King Brady. "Why, that is the train we are chasing!"

Harry turned to the conductor.

"How far ahead is the accident?" he asked.

"I reckon about five miles. It's this side of Woodsville."

The detectives looked at each other.

Then both started at full speed along the embankment. A few of the passengers did the same.

For a mile the Bradys kept to the railroad.

Then the broad country highway which ran parallel with the track appeared better walking.

Soon a farmer came along stepping a pair of colts.

He offered the Bradys a ride.

So they took to it.

The result was that it was not long before they reached the scene of the accident.

Here it was found that a rotten culvert had thrown the train from the rails.

Two people had been killed outright, and a score were injured.

A gang of men were at work trying to clear the track. In a pine grove beside the track the injured were being cared for.

The Bradys reached the scene, and at once began to look for Alvanni and his victim.

They were not among the passengers, but the Bradys, on inquiry, learned that some of the passengers had secured conveyance to Woodsville over the highway.

Old King Brady described Miss Jerrold.

"Yes," said one man. "I think there were two ladies, one very young and pretty, the other masculine and deeply veiled.

"They got a team to drive them to Woodsville. Probably they mean to get the local train north."

The Bradys waited for no more.

They found the farmer with the colts.

"Here, uncle," said Old King Brady, "here is ten dollars to take us into Woodsville on the fly!"

"I'm yer huckleberry!" cried the farmer, leaping into his wagon.

The Bradys followed suit, and soon they were being whirled away at full speed.

It was not long before the town became visible through the vista of the country road.

Then the lively colts took them into the main street, and up to the depot. The Bradys leaped out.

They saw two figures far down the station platform.

One was a tall, masculine-looking woman.

The other was a slender young girl. This was enough.

The Bradys approached them.

Suddenly the tall woman made a leap, cleared a fence and cut across a vacant lot.

The slender young girl clasped her hands and screamed.

The Bradys were after their quarry like sleuth-hounds.

But they were too late.

Alvanni, for he it was, had spied a saddle horse hitched to a post. In an instant he had pulled the knot in the rein, and vaulted upon the horse's back.

He was off like a streak, and went out of sight down the road out of the town.

The Bradys could only gaze after him. No means of ready pursuit were at hand.

But Old King Brady said:

"Never mind, Harry, we'll run him down yet! We've saved the girl."

The detectives stepped back upon the platform.

"Miss Jerrold," said Old King Brady, "I congratulate you upon a fortunate escape!"

To the detectives' surprise, the young girl met him with a cold stare.

"I do not know what right you have to pursue me in this way," she said, angrily.

"To save you from a terrible fate!" said Old King Brady.

"Humph! That is no doubt what some of my family have told you. I do not regard it as so terrible."

"Why, Miss Jerrold, do you realize how you have been deceived?"

"Deceived?"

"Yes. This man who has won your affections is the worst thief on record. More, he is a murderer!"

The detectives looked to see the young girl collapse.

But she did not.

Her lip curled in scorn.

"That sort of a story does not deceive me!" she said, curtly.

The Bradys were nonplussed.

"But it is true, I assure you. This Alvanni is the biggest scoundrel unhung."

"I do not care to hear any more."

"What are you going to do?"

"I am going to Quebec. I shall join my intended husband there. We shall be married there."

"Miss Jerrold, I beg you——"

"I will hear no more."

"But we shall arrest your intended husband for murder. Your disgrace will be absolute!"

The girl laughed scornfully.

"You will not deceive me!" she said. "Go back to New York. I shall never return there."

"Can we not dissuade you?"

"No!"

The Bradys, dumfounded, retired from the field. They hardly knew what to do.

"Let her go!" said Harry. "We must catch our man. If she wants to go to Quebec, let her go!"

"That's the idea!" agreed Old King Brady. "We've warned her."

"Sure!"

The Bradys procured horses, and gave chase to Alvanni. They scoured the region about.

But it was only to learn the next day that he had got a train at a station near St. Johnsbury, and gone on to Quebec.

Whether he had rejoined Miss Jerrold or not, it was not easy to guess. But the Bradys went on also.

There was nothing to do but to go to Quebec.

"Perhaps he will think himself safe there, and show his hand," said Harry. "That will be our chance."

"We shall soon know. I do not believe he will allow us to get in sight of him."

"Perhaps not."

The detectives disembarked at Point Levi, and took the ferry across to Quebec.

They went at once to the Chateau Frontenac.

To their surprise they saw on the hotel register, in big, sprawling chirography, the following:

"Count Dominico Alvanni,

"Florence, Italy.

"Miss May Jerrold,

"New York City, U. S. A."

The detectives were astounded at the boldness and the very strangeness of this.

They began to see Miss Jerrold in a new light.

"I fear the lady has lost her self-respect," said Old King Brady. "This is very odd!"

"I should say so!" agreed Harry. "What will society say?"

Old King Brady now addressed the clerk.

"The Count and Miss Jerrold arrived together," said the clerk, politely. "The Count's room is on the second floor, and Miss Jerrold's on the third."

"Do you know if they are in the hotel at present?" asked Old King Brady.

"I am not really sure. I will send a messenger up to see."

"Pray do so. You say they arrived together?"

"Yes, and took dinner at the same table. I trust it is all regular enough?" said the clerk, in a peculiar way.

"The lady had no other escort."

"Well," said Old King Brady, "we very much desire to interview the Count."

"Will you register?"

"Yes."

The Bradys wrote their names on the register.

The clerk gasped.

He leaned over the counter.

"You are detectives?" he whispered.

"Yes."

"Ah, I hope there will be no trouble in this hotel. We are very careful of its reputation."

"Have no fear. We will see to that."

"That recalls a fact," said the clerk, turning to his desk.

"A letter was left here addressed to Mr. James Brady."

"That is me."

"Here is the letter."

Old King Brady was astounded. Who was the letter from?

But he saw that it was not stamped or postmarked.

At once he guessed the truth.

He broke the seal.

Then the Bradys read the contents with varied emotions.

CHAPTER XII.

A YOUNG GIRL'S GRATITUDE.

It was written in the same flourishing hand seen on the page of the register.

Thus it read:

"To the Bradys, Detectives:

"My best greetings. When you will have received this we shall have become one. It is useless for you to pursue us, or to attempt to separate us. You may as well go back to New York. You have lost your game.

Yours,

ALVANNI."

The Bradys gasped at the audacity of this letter. It, however, disconcerted them a bit.

"They have gone!"

"Gone?" echoed the clerk.

"Yes!"

"That cannot be. They have not as yet settled their account."

"Are they in their rooms?"

"We will see."

At this moment the messenger returned.

"The rooms are empty," he said. "They have gone!"

Of course this created a great sensation. The clerk was very angry. He sent for the police.

The Bradys, however, set about getting the trail.

First they catechized the hotel employees.

They learned that the Count and Miss Jerrold had been seen to enter a caleche, or two-wheeled cab peculiar to Quebec, and drive away.

"Who was the driver of the caleche?" asked Harry.

"Joe Loliberte," was the reply.

It seemed nearly all the caleche-drivers were French.

"Do you know where he drove them?"

"No, monsieur."

"Can you find Loliberte for me?"

"If monsieur will get into my caleche, I will find him."

The Bradys did not hesitate.

They leaped into the odd vehicle.

The driver cracked his whip, and away they dashed. Around sharp corners they flew.

Suddenly the caleche driver pulled up short, and whistled.

Another vehicle came out of a side street.

The driver, a Frenchman, pulled up his horse.

"What you want, Pierre?"

"Two gentlemen want you, Joe. Come here."

The caleche driver got down. The Bradys at once questioned him.

"Yes, monsieur. I drove the nobleman and the lady to St. Francis' Church. They stopped at the priest's house."

"Ah, did they go in?"

"No. The young lady would not be married in the Catholic faith. The nobleman he get very angry."

"Well, what did they do?"

"I drive them to depot. They take train for Montreal."

Old King Brady swore softly.

"Just our luck, Harry!" he said. "Another long chase."

"But I think the outlook is more encouraging."

"You do?"

"Yes."

"How do you make that out?"

"Well, the girl is beginning to weaken. It's two to one she drops him."

"Well, that would be strange! Her predicament could hardly be remedied now."

"Society would never overlook it."

"If it was ever discovered."

"How can that be helped?"

"Well, let us see! Mrs. Fiske and ourselves are the only people outside of Alvanni and Miss Jerrold herself that know of it."

"We could be sworn to secrecy."

"Oh, yes!"

"It is too bad, for she is plainly the victim of a hypnotic spell. We must save her!"

"The only way to do it is to keep so hot on their track that the marriage cannot be consummated!"

"Just so!"

"The girl must soon come to her senses."

"It would seem so."

Thus the Bradys reasoned.

They leaped into the caleche, and gave orders to be driven back to the Chateau Frontenac.

They must pay their bill before leaving that hostelry. Besides, there was no train for Montreal until morning.

This was a serious drawback.

Of course it gave Alvanni so much start.

In Montreal there were Protestant ministers, and there the marriage might be consummated.

But a startling surprise was in store for the detectives.

When they entered the office of the hotel, they were met by the clerk.

"Ah, gentlemen," he cried, "I have news for you!"

"Well?"

"One of your parties has returned."

"Which?"

"The young lady."

The Bradys were dumfounded.

"You don't mean it!" said Old King Brady, slowly.

"Then she came back alone?"

"Yes, and her face was very red, as if she had been weeping. An officer was with her. She was very much frightened."

"Where is she now?"

"In her room."

Old King Brady pulled out a card.

"Take this up to her," he said. "We must see her."

A bell-boy departed with the card. In a few moments he returned.

Miss Jerrold would be glad to see the Bradys.

The detectives at once made their way to the room of the victimized young girl.

She stood in the centre of the room, the picture of misery and awful suffering.

The Bradys bowed politely as they entered.

"This is an honor, Miss Jerrold," said the old detective, courteously. "In what way can we serve you?"

"Oh, Mr. Brady!" cried the young girl, in a transport of grief, "if I had only listened to you! Oh, I have suffered so much!"

"There, there, don't take on so!" said Old King Brady, with fatherly tenderness. "You have done nothing wrong. It was only a mistake."

"Oh, indeed that is all, and I have seen it in time to save my self-respect and my life! But I fear my reputation is lost!"

"No, no," said the old detective, kindly. "That shall be fixed all right."

A ray of hope seemed to shoot across the young girl's soul.

"Are you sincere? Oh, tell me the truth," she pleaded. "Is not the story of the elopement all over New York?"

"I don't think so. Mrs. Fiske understood all, and be sure she will look out for that."

Gasping sobs escaped the young girl's lips.

"Oh, it was so dreadful!" she said. "I don't see what ailed me. I thought I loved him; and he told me such fine stories of life in Italy. I believed in him."

"But when I refused to marry in the Catholic faith, I found him out. He abused me savagely, and tried to force

me to go with him to the priest. See how he injured my wrist.

"Then I began to see that I had made an awful mistake. I read his true character. I thought I should faint when he tried to make me go with him aboard the train to Montreal.

"But something gave me strength. I broke away from him and ran. He chased me, but I screamed, and a policeman came to my aid. He then disappeared."

She sank down in a chair and gave way to frantic grief.

"Oh, what will my dear mamma say, and my brothers?" she moaned, in anguish. "And the awful scandal if it gets out."

"Courage!" said Old King Brady. "I believe it can all be averted."

"But I fear it is known. My brothers would scour the country. They would leave no stone unturned."

"Trust Mrs. Fiske for that!" said Old King Brady, confidently. "Have no fear, neither she nor your folks are going to tell family secrets. I am sure it can never leak out."

"But for revenge—he will tell it——"

"Alvanni?"

"Yes."

Old King Brady and Harry laughed.

"We shall see that his lips are sealed," they said. "The electric chair will soon claim him! Nothing he can say against you will be believed."

"What an escape for me! Oh, what a mad fool I have been!" she said, wringing her hands. "But what shall I do, gentlemen?"

"We will wire your brothers. They can be here in forty-eight hours. You will then do some traveling in Canada with them, returning to New York at your leisure. See?"

"Oh, how can I ever repay you?"

"We ask no pay."

"And you——"

"We shall go after this villain, and run him to earth. He shall not escape us!"

The young girl turned to the window and looked up to the bright blue sky. Her lips were seen to move in prayer, doubtless of gratitude to that Providence which had so mercifully preserved her.

Presently Old King Brady asked:

"Do you think he took the train for Montreal?"

"No. The train left while I was trying to escape from him."

"Then he is in Quebec!" said Harry. "There is not another train until to-morrow morning, unless he goes back to the States. Partner, we must find him!"

CHAPTER XIII.

A NIGHT INTERVIEW.

The Bradys turned to leave the room.

But Miss Jerrold, with white, scared face, exclaimed:

"Oh, wait! You say he cannot leave Quebec to-night?"

"He cannot."

"Oh, then, I pray you, do not leave me alone. He is a very desperate man. I am not safe. I fear he will kill me."

"We shall see that you have companionship and protection," said Old King Brady. "Before we leave the hotel that shall be done."

"Oh, I am so grateful to you!"

The detectives went downstairs. The clerk conferred with the

He was a sensible and astute young man. Many a secret is locked in the inscrutable bosom of the average respectable hotel clerk.

"She shall be guarded," he said. "I will place a detective in the corridor, and my wife shall remain with her constantly until her brother arrives."

"She is as pure and innocent as an angel," said Old King Brady. "It was a villain's dark game."

The clerk bowed gravely.

"I understand," he said. "She is safe here, and in my care."

The Bradys now left the hotel.

Darkness had settled down over the famous city of Quebec.

As they crossed the promenade and reached Dufferin Terrace, the detectives paused a moment to look down upon the lights of lower Quebec.

"It is a dubious outlook, partner," said Harry. "He has got a big start of us."

"Do you think he has left the city?"

"Surely he would not dare to remain here."

"Indeed, I think he would. He is a desperate scoundrel, and he is deeply in love with this girl. He will not give her up easily."

"Then we have a chance."

"I think so."

"Let us watch closely."

The detectives strolled along the Terrace.

They finally reached the long stairs leading up to the citadel. Above frowned the dark walls of the ancient fortress.

A few people were strolling along the cliff.

But beyond the radius of the lamps on the platform all was dark shadow.

The Bradys ascended the steps until they had reached a point half way to the citadel.

Then suddenly muffled voices came to their ears.

These voices came from a point on the face of the cliff, near where the great landslide had occurred.

For a moment the detectives felt no interest in listening.

But a stray word or two which caught the ear caused them to halt.

They hesitated a moment, and then crept along the brow of the cliff.

Plainly now they heard every word spoken.

"Curse you, Everhard, you have turned up in just the nick of time. I can use you."

The voice was Alvanni's.

"Is that so?" replied a hoarse voice. "Well, I've been living in clover since I skipped the States. It'll take something good to tempt me."

"Don't you fear. I've got it, all right!"

"Well, what is it?"

"You are well acquainted in this town?"

"Well, I should say! I reckon I know the joints."

"Well, where can I find a good, safe place to hide a woman?"

"Oho! In the petticoat business, are you?"

"Just a trifle. But no joking, give me the word!"

There was a moment of silence.

"Well," said the fellow called Everhard, "the best place I know of is out on the Montmorenci Road."

"What sort of a place is it?"

"Oh, it's a road house. Seven-Up Jack Gaspard keeps it. He's the slickest Frenchman in Quebec. They can't fool him."

"That's straight?"

"Yes."

"How do you get out there?"

"With a caleche, or any kind of a team."

"Humph! that's all right. You think the girl would be safe there?"

"Well, I'll tell ye. They can pull the house down and they wouldn't find her. Understand?"

"Underground?"

"Yes."

"That is good enough for me," said Alvanni. "Now, Everhard, there's money in this for you."

"How much?"

"One thousand dollars."

"Humph! that's not much."

"Well, make it sure, and it shall be fifteen hundred."

"All right. What am I to do?"

"This girl is at the Chateau."

"Whew! She must be a tony one."

"Well, I guess! Heiress to two million. She eloped with me——"

"With you?"

"Yes."

"Ye gods and little fishes!"

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing. Go ahead!" said Everhard. "You always were a lucky dog. There must be easy people in New York."

"Well, I've been milking a good thing out there. Nothing but swag, and if it hadn't been for the cursed gaming tables, I'd be a millionaire now myself."

"The deuce you say!"

"It's true!"

"Well, about the girl?"

"She is a beauty, and rich. She thinks I am a nobleman. I have passed for a Florentian. If she knew I was a miserable Neapolitan, she would be horrified."

"Well, I induced her to elope with me. But when I wanted her to go to Father Baptiste to be married, she took fright, and backed out."

"When a woman won't, she won't!"

"Just so! Now she's got away from me. What is worse, two cursed New York detectives have hounded me all the way."

"Detectives?"

"Yes, you know them—the two Bradys."

"Jupiter! Are the Bradys in Quebec?" gasped Everhard.

"Yes."

"The devil! If they get sight of me——"

"Bah! They must not do it! Now, listen!"

"What are the Bradys after you for?"

"Oh, that cursed fool, Balding, crossed me, and I gave him the knife in a dark alley. The Bradys traced it to me."

"Look here!"

"Well?"

"Perhaps I can fix it that they'll never leave Quebec alive."

"Good! I hope you can; but first, the girl."

"What's the hurry?"

"She will take a notion to slip back home to New York."

"Oh, I see. What is the game?"

"I'll tell you. She is now at the Chateau Frontenac."

"Yes."

"Well, of course I've got to entrap her in some way. Now——"

Alvanni ceased speaking. There was reason for this.

A small stone came rolling down the cliff, and shot past his head.

It had been dislodged by Harry's heel.

The Bradys had sought to change their position so as to get their birds between them and the citadel.

If they could have done this, there would have been a chance to capture them.

But the dislodged stone ruined this chance.

"Le diable!" exclaimed Everhard. "We are overheard."

"Quick, this way!"

"Hold, or you are dead men!" said Old King Brady, in a voice of steel.

But the two crooks had no idea of acquiescing.

They made a quick leap down the cliff side.

The old detective's revolver spoke. The Bradys started in pursuit.

But the face of the cliff was rough and rocky.

Being unfamiliar with the path they were delayed. This gave the crooks their chance.

Search as the Bradys would, they could find no trace of the villains.

Old King Brady had a belief that they would be found secreted in a niche of the cliff.

But not a trace of them could be found.

For over two hours the Bradys continued the quest.

Then they started back for Quebec. They had gone as far as the Heights of Abraham.

And not until now did the Bradys recall the danger threatening the young girl at the Chateau Frontenac.

"My soul!" gasped Harry, "what if the villain has long

since got back into the city by a circuit? He has had sufficient time to carry out his scheme of a decoy!"

"You are right!" agreed Old King Brady. "We must go back at once."

The detectives sped back to Dufferin Terrace. It was a long, hard climb.

But finally they reached it.

Then they broke into a run for the Chateau Frontenac.

They reached the hotel, and rushed into the office. All seemed quiet enough, and the clerk was in his usual place.

He looked up in startled surprise as the Bradys appeared.

"Where is Miss Jerrold?" asked Old King Brady, abruptly.

The clerk stared.

"Miss Jerrold!" he exclaimed. "Why, she and my wife departed a half hour since in the carriage which you sent for them."

CHAPTER XIV.

AT GASPARD'S.

The Bradys nearly collapsed.

"Which we sent for them?" gasped Harry. "A carriage?"

"Certainly, a carriage."

"My soul!" ejaculated Old King Brady. "We are too late!"

The clerk's face was white.

"What do you mean? Did you not send a carriage?"

"No!"

For a moment the clerk leaned sick and faint over the counter.

"God be merciful!" he said. "A carriage came here for Miss Jerrold. The driver had a note from you saying that friends would arrive on the train from the States."

"The young lady begged my wife to go with her! They have been gone full thirty minutes! Is it a decoy?"

The detective groaned.

"A villainous plot!" he cried. "We heard of it too late to avert it. But have no fear. We shall save them——"

There was a clatter of horses' hoofs and the rattle of wheels in the porte cochere.

The next moment a disheveled, distraught woman rushed into the office.

It was the clerk's wife.

"Oh, quick!" she screamed. "Call the police, go in pursuit! They have taken her away."

With a bound Old King Brady was at the woman's side.

"Which way did they go?" he asked. "Do you know?"

"I think they took the Montmorenci Road."

"Is this the caleche driver who took you away from here?"

"No, it is one I employed to bring me home."

Hurriedly the excited woman told her story.

"We suspected nothing," she said. "We were to be driv-

en to lower Quebec, to meet you and friends. The young lady believed the friends to be her brothers."

"We were busy talking, and gave no heed to aught else. Suddenly I looked out of the window, and saw that we had left the city limits."

"Then I began to suspect a trap. I screamed and tried to beat my way out. Suddenly the carriage stopped. Two rough-looking men pulled me out, and left me in the road. They dashed away with her. I managed to walk back to the city, and found a carriage to bring me here."

The detectives waited to hear no more.

They at once enlisted the caleche driver at the door.

They thrust money into his hands, and Old King Brady cried:

"Drive us to Jack Gaspard's, on the Montmorenci Road."

"Put your horse to his best paces!" said Harry. "Remember, the quicker time you make the better your pay."

The caleche driver needed no further incentive.

He put the lash to his horse, and away the detectives were whirled.

Out of the city and into the country highway the caleche sped. The Bradys still urged the driver.

It was a mad ride in the darkness.

Few people were met on the highway, as the road to Gaspard's was little frequented at that late hour.

After what seemed a century to the Bradys, the driver drew his horse in a bit, in the darkness of a tract of forest.

"Listen!" he said. "Does monsieur hear the roar of the falls?"

The detectives heard a distant, dull booming.

They knew that it came from the Montmorenci Falls, which thundered down over the mighty cliff into the St. Lawrence.

"Gaspard's is to the right," said the driver. "Will monsieur be driven to the tavern?"

"Yes," said Old King Brady. "And waste no time."

Up to the door of the road house the caleche was driven.

The detectives leaped out.

They saw a long, low-roofed building, with wide piazzas. It had once been a colonial mansion of a wealthy British settler and army officer.

The low windows were blazing with light.

There were sounds of laughter, and a ribald song. A number of teams were hitched in the yard.

"Here we are!" said Old King Brady. "Now, Harry, the die is cast!"

"I have no desire to turn back."

"Wait here for us," said the old detective to the driver.

The Bradys crossed the piazza, and entered the bar-room of Gaspard's place.

It was a long, low-ceiled room, such as one might expect in that kind of house.

A long bar, loaded with glasses and bottles, extended across the room.

A half dozen men of various types were at this bar.

They were engaged in loud conversation, and only glanced up idly at the entrance of the detectives.

For a moment the Bradys were undecided.

They saw nothing of Alvanni or Everhard. A stout, florid-faced man stood behind the bar.

At once they guessed him to be the notorious Gaspard.

The keeper of the road house glanced at the detectives, and for a moment his eyes glittered.

But the stolidity of his manner was not in the least relaxed. He stared at them in a vacant way.

"Is this Monsieur Gaspard?" asked Old King Brady, in a low tone.

"Oui, monsieurs."

"We would speak with you in private."

"My whole house is private," said the road-house keeper, with a sweep of his hand. "These are my friends. Fear not to speak."

At this the toughs at the bar turned as with one move, and glared at the detectives.

The Bradys saw that they were in for it.

Lively work was before them.

"This is a matter which you may not care to have made public," said Old King Brady, firmly.

Gaspard gave a horse laugh.

"Don't consider me, monsieurs, I beg of you!"

"But in deference to us, you will speak with us in private?"

"No!" said Gaspard, shortly. "I am with my friends."

"And we will not be deprived of his society," said one burly fellow, with a leer.

The toughs seemed to take a tip from Gaspard that the visitors were not welcome.

Old King Brady gave the fellow a cold stare.

"My business is not with you," he said.

At this all the others laughed.

"You've no business with him, Guérineau," they shouted.

The fellow, who was the worse for liquor, flushed hotly.

"Mon Dieu!" he gritted. "I will show you!"

He walked ostentatiously up to the old detective, and ejected a squirt of tobacco juice, which was meant for Old King Brady's eye.

The detective dodged it quickly, and like a lightning flash his right arm shot out.

Guérineau seemed to turn somersaults into the corner of the room, where he lay stunned.

For a moment dead silence ensued.

That the toughs were too astonished to speak or act was the true explanation.

But finally Gaspard drew a deep, hissing breath.

"Per Dieu! An insult to me!"

"Kill the Yankee dog!"

"Only a Yankee strikes with his fists. Kill him!"

Five burly brutes they were, and three of them sprang forward. One of them held a knife.

This fellow Old King Brady singled out.

The old detective grasped a stool and hurled it at the fellow. It sent him down unconscious.

It was now two to one.

Harry made a quick leap to one side, and then swung his fist against the face of one of the Frenchmen.

It mashed his nose in a twinkling, and sent him to the floor. The other three were warily brought to a halt.

Then Old King Brady gave Harry a signal.

"Clear the place out!" he cried.

Quick as a flash the two detectives drew their revolvers.

It was not their intention to kill or seriously wound any in the place.

But they would give them the worst fright of their lives.

Old King Brady, with lightning aim, fired at the feet of the tough nearest him.

The fellow leaped into the air with a howl of pain.

The bullet had crushed one of his toes. He burst through the door and vanished.

He was out of the fight.

Harry sent a bullet across the cheek of his nearest man, and then shot a hole in his ear.

Frightened almost to death, the fellow bolted. How many miles he ran to get out of range was never recorded.

The other two ruffians started to rush into the next room.

But the dead-shot detectives pierced the hand of one, pierced the arm of the next, and sent them both howling into the night.

The place was literally cleaned out.

Aghast and shaking with fear, Gaspard leaned against his bar.

He could not escape.

By way of impressing matters upon him, the Bradys smashed the mirror behind him, shot away his watch chain, lifted a tuft of hair from his scalp, and shot away the bottles from the bar.

CHAPTER XV.

WHICH IS THE LAST.

Such a fusillade was deafening and terrifying. But its moral effect was tremendous.

In a few brief moments, as it were, the Bradys had turned the odds in their favor.

Old King Brady covered the road-house keeper.

"Gaspard!" he said sternly, "come out from behind that bar!"

"Merci, monsieur! Oh, give me my life! I will do what you say."

"Come out!" thundered Old King Brady.

The bulky French-Canadian complied nimbly.

"Down on your knees!"

With alacrity Gaspard obeyed.

"Now, you compound essence of villany," roared the old detective, "will you give me a private conversation?"

"Oui, monsieur! Oh, do not kill me!"

"Listen, you skunk! I want the truth from you."

"I swear it, monsieur."

"Tell me, now—if you lie I will kill you!—where are the underground chambers in which you keep abducted women and children?"

Fearfully distorted with terror and dismay, Gaspard's features were livid and death-struck in hue.

"Oh, monsieur. pity! I have no such place!"

Old King Brady thrust the cold muzzle into the fellow's face.

"The truth!" he roared.

"Oh, yes, yes! I have—I will!" screamed the terrified brute. "Don't shoot! Oh! oh!"

He sank back almost in an apoplectic fit.

Old King Brady waited a moment for him to recover.

Then he said sternly:

"The truth, now, Gaspard. You know Everhard?"

"Yes, yes!"

"He was here to-night?"

"Oh, yes, monsieur!"

"With him came an Italian named Alvanni, and between them was a young girl."

"Monsieur, I protest——"

"Don't lie!"

Again the cold muzzle was felt in the brute's face.

"Oh, yes, yes, monsieur. They were here, but they have gone!"

Crack!

The bullet cut a circular piece from the villain's ear.

He gave a yell of mortal agony, and groveled on the floor. It was some while before he was convinced that he had not been mortally wounded.

The detectives waited.

After lengthy paroxysms, the cowardly villain felt of his wounded ear, and then pig-like eyes were fixed on the detectives.

"The next time you lie to me," said Old King Brady, "I'll kill you!"

"Oh, give mercy, monsieur!"

"That depends on you. Now tell me, where is the young girl?"

"Oh, monsieur——"

"Quick! Is she in this place?"

"Oui, monsieur, oui!"

"Is she unharmed?"

"Oui, I swear it!"

"Where are her two abductors?"

Gaspard was silent.

"Don't lie!"

The wretch now cast himself at full length at Old King Brady's feet.

"Oh, monsieur, think of my fate!" he wailed. "I shall be ruined! They will hang me! Be merciful, and I will do all monsieur asks. I will deliver to him the young girl and tell him where he may find the two men. But he will not betray me in Québec? Promise, monsieur."

"Gaspard," said Old King Brady, coldly, "your race is run. You have reached the end of your rope. It is a question whether I shoot you, or you die on the gallows."

Harry slipped manacles on the fellow's wrists.

Gaspard's manner changed.

"I shall tell you all, and you will help me," he said.

"You will not hang me?"

"We shall see that you get full justice."

"Let me get up!"

Gaspard was assisted to his feet by Harry.

The road-house keeper looked sadly about him at the wreck of his bar-room.

"I am ruined! I am ruined!" he said. "Come!"

Gaspard went behind the bar. He pressed a spring and the partition swung slowly back.

A flight of steps were thus revealed. Down these all three now went.

There was a stone corridor underneath. The underground chambers were revealed.

A dim light shone through a barred door. Gaspard unlocked it and swung it open.

There was a stifled cry, and the rustle of feminine garments.

The next moment Old King Brady was face to face with May Jerrold. The young girl was standing on the defensive, with a bar of iron which she had found in the cell in her hand.

But she dropped it with a glad cry:

"Oh, Mr. Brady!"

"Miss Jerrold! Thank heaven we have found you!"

Half fainting, the young girl was led from her prison cell. A few words were exchanged.

"Oh, yes," she said, "I am all right. You may leave me here. If I had a weapon——"

"I have a small revolver," said Harry. "We will soon return."

Then the Bradys were led by Gaspard further along the passage. The murmur of voices was heard.

Heavy curtains hung in front of a door.

Old King Brady placed his revolver to Gaspard's back.

"Open the door and enter!" he said, sternly.

Reluctantly the terrified villain complied. The door swung open. A long room ceiled with logs was seen.

There were tables, and at these a half dozen men were smoking, drinking and playing cards.

The apparition of Gaspard, with the Bradys at his back, had a tremendous effect upon the gamblers.

They sprang up in confusion. A great cry went up:

"The police! The place is raided! Get out for your lives!"

There was a stampede. Four of the men vanished by means of an exit at the lower end of the room.

Two were left. Being unfamiliar with the exit, Everhard and Alvanni were trapped.

Old King Brady, with a couple of flying leaps, had reached the lower end of the cellar.

When Alvanni and Everhard started in that direction, they looked into the muzzles of the detectives' revolvers.

Alvanni had essayed to pull a revolver from his pocket; but with lightning aim Old King Brady shot it from his hand.

With a howl of pain, the Italian sank down upon the floor.

Everhard threw up his hands.

"I cave, gentlemen!" he said. "I am yours!"

"Handcuff them, Harry."

Gaspard in vain begged for his liberty.

He offered to pay a fortune for his freedom. But the Bradys would not yield.

"You have played your game out, Gaspard," said Old King Brady. "The world does not need you!"

The Bradys found Miss Jerrold bravely awaiting them in the cell. She was overjoyed.

"Oh, thank heaven that you found me!" she cried. "I owe all to you!"

Back to Quebec the party went. The caleche would not hold all; but some of the fleeing villains had left a team behind, which the detectives confiscated.

The prisoners were taken to the Quebec police headquarters.

Their arrest created a tremendous sensation in the staid little city. The Bradys had succeeded in what the Canadian police had been trying for years to do.

Everhard and Gaspard were left to the tender mercies of the Canadian courts.

Extradition papers were easily obtained for Alvanni.

Miss Jerrold proceeded to the Chateau Frontenac. Her relatives arrived a few days later.

Then explanations were in order. They were too much delighted at her safe escape to chide her.

It is hardly necessary to say that the Bradys came in for much gratitude from the afflicted family.

Matters were very diplomatically arranged.

Miss Jerrold, with her brothers, made a tour of the Pro-

vinces, and returned to New York later a wiser and happier girl.

The elopement and its thrilling features ever remained a secret locked in the breasts of the detectives and Miss Jerrold's family.

Alvanni was tried and executed for murder. His accomplice, Gazzini, went to prison for a term of years.

There was a mystery over the sudden disappearance of Prince Scato and Count Vladimir. But Mrs. Fiske very skilfully laid that ghost.

And so ended the Bradys' case in high life. But with its finish they entered upon a new and even more exciting case, of which we may tell later.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AMONG THIEVES; OR, HOT WORK IN THE BOWERY," which will be the next number (115) of "Secret Service."

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